

月が導く異世界道中

Tsukiga Michibiku Isekai Dochu

5



学園都市に

グレート・ティーチャー・真

アルファポリス

G.T.M.

「僕の本業、商人
なんですけど(真)」

大ヒット!

累計 **17万部!**

爆誕!!

拝啓、
父さん、母さん。
生徒になるはずが
なぜか先生に
なつてました……

薄幸系男子の異世界ファンタジー、待望の第 **5** 巻!!

Tsuki ga Michibiku Isekai Douchuu

(月が導く異世界道中)

Volume 05

Fourth Tome

Kusunoha's Tour

Azumi Kei

(あずみ 圭)

Story Description:

High school student Misumi Makoto is called into a fantasy world by the goddess Tsukuyomi, in order to be a hero. However, the Goddess of this world isn't as thrilled to have him there, and they kick him to the edge of the world just as Tsukuyomi declares that she must leave him to find his own way. Now it's up to him to find his own way!

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

Chapter 172: Fair-weather girlfriend

A full-scale winter approaches the academy city of Rotsgard.

Several months have passed since the mutant incident that occurred during the annual school festival.

It was a tragedy in which there were a considerable number of casualties as well as significant damage to the city, but it already feels like the city has recovered.

There are still places with empty plots of land, but even those are already being worked on. The city has caught its breath and begun to move forward.

The town's structure is different from that of earth, of Japan.

The biggest cause of that difference is probably magic, though.

Removing rubble, recycling materials, constructing buildings and making roads.

It was proceeding at a rate that makes Earth's modern construction techniques pale in comparison.

Freely using the mages of the academy and seeing their work with my own eyes, it was truly amazing.

It's so fast that I can't even be surprised with the speed at which the city in Asora was built anymore.

In fact, considering that the Eldwas were leading the craftsmen, now I can see that they weren't just being humble when they said they worked slowly because they were being thorough.

「Sorry for keeping you waiting, here's your large-portion lunch.」

「Thanks.」(Makoto)

For a "large portion", it's not very much, huh.

As I try to form an impression of the meal that I ordered, I look out the window.

This is a new store within five minutes' walk from the Kuzunoha company's store.

It was a first for me, but the Kuzunoha company decided to try expanding to the suburbs with a new store.

In the place where we wanted to set up a temporary store, the people from the neighborhood who originally owned shops here closed them and moved somewhere else, so their land became available to purchase.

After I discussed it with Shiki, I bought all of the land.

In the end, the company's location moved only a very small distance, dubiously close to the academy.

The store is wider than before, and by hiring part-time workers, we're proceeding smoothly with the new store's opening.

At midday, on days when the special lecturers of the academy aren't needed, I can come here and eat lunch like this without having to go far.

Just because Ruria isn't here anymore doesn't mean that we've lost our nabe*, so as usual, Shiki goes to Gotetsu often.

TLN*: Hot pot (food dish)

「I guess this is something like a café. It's not really suitable to eat at, even if it's good for having conversations with people.」(Makoto) They don't even give you a lot of food.

Mio definitely wouldn't be satisfied with this place.

She's not the type who likes stores that only have a nice atmosphere.

As expected, a lot of the customers are young people who have just started as students.

There are quite a lot of people like this at our own store, too, huh.

I guess it's because we stock up on rare fruits.

And for the students of Rotsgard academy, where it's not uncommon to be injured while training their practical skills, it's good to always have all kinds of medicine and ointments ready when needed.

There are also quite a few who come to our store with their eyes set on our part-time workers, Jin and Amelia.

「Either way. The store does fine without me there.」(Makoto) I'm a little lonely.

Aqua and Eris have been becoming reliable lately. They've set up a system where there are no problems, even if I'm not there.

Though that's what I was aiming for.

Ever since the school festival, I've been receiving requests from all over the place and have been busy going here and there.

At this rate, I'm going to have my hands full with the visits to Limia and Gritonia that I'm being urged to go on and my interview with the Demon Lord. Root said something about wanting me to do something if I'm planning to go somewhere far away as well.

「Haah, I wasn't able to buy the Kuzunoha Fruits Set today, either.」(Male 1) 「Trying to get those is like a lottery that's drawn before the store even opens. It's just a matter of luck.」(Male 2) 「I wish we knew someone who has connections there.」(Male 1) 「I heard the normal employees don't even give special treatment, you know? If you got a part-time job there you might be able to secure some for yourself to eat, but they're not recruiting right now. The higher-up person is called Shiki and the store owner is called Raidou, I think? You might have a chance if you know those people.」(Male 2) 「I don't have any contacts, and it's not like I want to eat it myself, I've been asked to get it by my girlfriend. If you really want to eat it that bad, you should go line up for it yourself, jeez.」(Male 1) 「... Could it be that you've never eaten it before?」(Male 2) 「No. It's just fruit, right? I'd rather have one of those weapons they sell.」(Male 1) 「Eh, it's amazing, you know? I definitely recommend that you try it at least once.」(Male 2) They're talking about our store.

I look at the two who are discussing the Kuzunoha company, being careful not to be noticed.

Academy students?

They're in plain clothes, so I can't tell.

They're two young people, around my age.

Fruit, huh.

As usual, our quantity-limited cut fruits are being treated as rare items.

When I get back, I'll ask about increasing our stocks on those.

「What, you've eaten it before? There are a lot of people who say that it's not worth the price, you know?」(Male 1) 「Those are either people who've never tried it, or those who have no interest in food at all. It's so good that if I could eat it once a week, I wouldn't need any other sweet food for the rest of the week.」(Male 2) 「To think that you'd say that when you eat the desserts at a café once every two days. Are those yellow ring things cookies or something?」(Male 1) He's talking about pineapples.

It's fun to gouge out their centers, so I've gone to help them with it a few times.

The ones from Asora don't sting the tongue even if you have a lot of them, so they're easy to eat.

「Whether it's medicine, food or weapons, the Kuzunoha company does something different from the rest. Whether it's the level or the quality of the items themselves.」(Male 2) 「I'll agree with you there. And, most of all.」(Male 1) 「Their employees are nice.」(Both males)

「Yeah.」(Male 1)

「Yeah.」(Male 2)

When the way we treat our customers is praised, I feel happy, as if I've been praised myself.

When they begged me to let them work for me, I made sure to teach both Jin and Amelia how to treat customers properly.

It seems they're putting that into practice properly.

The forest ogres and dwarves are treating the customers nicely, too.

Though when it comes to people they know or regular customers, I'm

worried about Eris.

「You know her?! Hey, when it comes to Kuzunoha's welcoming girls, there's only that person, right?!」(Male 1) 「Yeah, I was confused at first. But I'd love to make that person my lover.」(Male 2) 「She's reliable and thorough when it comes to her work, so she's got herself together.」(Male 1) 「She's cute, gentle and kind. Other girls should learn a thing or two from her, seriously.」(Male 2) Even so, they're talking about lovers?

Thinking such rude things about our employees.

They're talking about girls, so... Probably Amelia.

That girl, she seems to look only at Shiki, but she's still popular among the customers, huh.

Wait, "reliable and thorough when it comes to her work"?

On top of that, "cute, gentle and kind"?

Is she a girl who would deserve this level of praise?

「She's just like a princess, huh.」(Male 1)

「She's a princess.」(Male 2)

「Aqua-san is the best.」(Male 1)

「Eris-san is the best.」(Male 2)

「Buh!」(Makoto)

Guah, my sour juice went down the wrong way!

It hurts, it really hurts!

What a surprise attack this is!

As I unconsciously spit out my drink, I get some strange, pitiful looks.

I can only keep my head down in shame.

Aqua?

Eris?!

Do these guys have rotten brains or something?!

「Ah?」(Male 1)

「Huh?」(Male 2)

They're not talking to me.

They're questioning each other, because they both said different names.

I want to put in a word of my own, but I need to recover from my unfortunate incident first and regain my composure.

Aqua might be reliable and thorough when it comes to her work, but she's rather businesslike towards the customers.

Eris is small so she might appear cute, but no matter how you look at it, she's definitely not gentle or kind.

Or so I think.

No, the thing is, they're humans and they want to make a demi-human their lover?

Either the Kuzunoha company has really found its place in the city among the students, or young people are more flexible in their way of thinking.

Could it be that they were brainwashed when they were rescued by Aqua and Eris during the mutant rebellion?

「Hey hey, if we're talking about the welcoming girls*, then it's got to be Aqua-san. Eris-san is not bad either, but her charm only exists because of Aqua-san, you know?」(Male 1) TLN*: The term here is “看板娘/kanban-musume”. The dictionary definition of this term is “pretty girl who attracts customers to come inside a shop”

「What are you saying, the way that Eris-san accurately judges our moods and what we want makes her the ultimate welcoming girl, right? Use some common sense. It's a little hard for Aqua-san to compare to someone like that, don't you think?」(Male 2) They've started acting like JK's.

JK's that aren't female high-school students.

TLN: “JK” is a slang-term that stands for “女子高生/joshi-kousei”, which

means “female high-school student”

Things have clearly heated up compared to when they were discussing our products.

Wow, they’re standing up now.

Surely they’re not planning to have a fistfight over this stupid argument, are they?!

Should I stop them?

No, I get the feeling that things wouldn’t be settled even if I stepped in, so I don’t want to get involved... It would be more adult-like to leave them be. Yes.

「Hey!」(Girl 1)

Oh, someone’s come in to stop them.

What a hero.

I will secretly support you, girls.

「W-what do you want?」(Male 1)

「The best welcoming girl of the Kuzunoha company is definitely Shiki-san, isn’t it?!」(Girl 1) 「Wait, you! Isn’t it Lime-san?!」(Girl 2)

...

I’ll add this store to the list of places I should never visit.

「Huh?! We’re talking about welcoming girls! Who the hell wants to talk about freaking guys?!」(Male 2) 「If you just think about it, there’s no difference between guys and girls! The male employees there are really handsome, gentle and kind! They’re the best!」(Girl 1) I guess I’ll go back.

I stand up, quickly pay and head for the exit.

I can’t say that I have any interest in the outcome of this debate among these people who seem to be our core fans.

In fact, I’m slightly regretting that I even began to listen to this conversation in the first place.

What are they doing at the window seats?

It seems that even the employee, who has been carefully observing with a smile, has decided that something needs to be done. In the corner of my eye, I see him moving towards the windows.

This kind of fame might be problematic for us.

The bright light of the sunny street is dazzling.

「You there.」(Mystery person)

Hmm, me?

Someone has called out to me, so I stop.

「Excuse me, but I heard that there's a store called the Kuzunoha company near here...」 (Mystery person) Oh, it's a customer looking for our store.

「In that case, if you go along this street -」(Makoto) As I turn towards the person who called out to me to give them directions, I freeze.

「... You, it can't be.」(Mystery person)

That's my line.

What are the chances of this.

「...」(Makoto)

I've been hypothesizing many different ways this could happen, but I never imagined we'd meet like this; words won't even come out.

Either this is the result of the star that I was born under, or I've somehow been drawn to Senpai.

「If I recall, your name was Misumi-kun?」(Mystery person) She knows my name?

Even though our relationship was that of mere acquaintances who only exchanged words a few times.

No, for Otonashi-senpai, it's possible.

She's a person with no visible flaws, inside or outside.

To the point you'd wonder, "humans like this exist?"

Really, why is Senpai in this world?

「... Otonashi-senpai.」(Makoto)

The hero's party left Limia heading for the Lorel Union with a strict transfer schedule to follow. They didn't have any plans to come to academy city.

But now, the hero of Limia is right in front of my eyes, asking for the location of the Kuzunoha company.

Otonashi Hibiki-senpai.

I get the impression that she's a little sharper than she was when I met her while she was the student council president.

Seeing Senpai here, whispering her name is the only reaction I'm capable of.

Chapter 173: From the same town

Honestly, Senpai is famous and her movements are easy to predict, so I had never imagined a case where I would meet her simply by chance.

It's somewhat fortunate that Shiki, who's acquainted with her, isn't with me right now. Maybe I should be happy with that... But I'm not.

If I'm not mistaken, Shiki will be at Asora for the whole day today.

Which means there's no chance that he'll meet Senpai.

Let's see, the people that Senpai and I are commonly acquainted with would be Limia's king and Prince Joshua.

So it's safer to assume that those two have talked to Senpai about me while referring to me as Raidou.

But Senpai is aware that I'm Misumi Makoto, so she shouldn't know that I'm Raidou.

So should I introduce myself as Raidou now or would it be better to conceal that I'm Raidou?

If I introduce myself as Raidou, she'll know that Raidou is the leader of the Kuzunoha company. Senpai definitely came here knowing that the Kuzunoha company is here, right?

Which means that even if I hide it now, I get the feeling that fact will be revealed sooner or later.

Wait. Is it a problem if Senpai knows that I'm Raidou?

When I went to Limia, I didn't call myself Raidou, I think.

So if I don't introduce myself as Raidou here, I guess the chances of it being revealed in the near future are pretty high?

In that case, it's better to tell the truth?

I could just explain that I'm using this false name because there's someone (a goddess) that I don't want my movements to be noticed by.

And I get the feeling that even if I try to lie here, Senpai will pick up on

my suspicious behavior anyway.

...

Okay, let's introduce myself as Raidou.

That's easier, and better for the future as well.

The inside of my head is quite chaotic as I think about various things, but I somehow manage to come to a decision.

「Misumi-kun?」(Hibiki)

Senpai calls out to me, since I've frozen in place.

「Ah, Senpai, actually...」(Makoto)

As Senpai gives me a puzzled look, I explain that I'm going by the name of Raidou now.

For some reason, Senpai looks extremely shocked upon learning that I'm Raidou.

The king and the prince.

Just what have you been telling Senpai about me!

「Ah, you're Raidou? That's the same name as the head of the Kusunoha company, isn't it?」(Hibiki) 「Y-yes. I'm acting as the leader for the Kusunoha company. Though I'm being helped a lot by the people around me.」(Makoto) 「Misumi-kun is... Raidou... Wait a moment, that's important too, but isn't there a more important detail?!」(Hibiki) 「Eh?」(Makoto)

「Are you a hero, too? I heard from the goddess that there are two heroes in this world. The fact that you're here means that you're a third one, right?」(Hibiki) 「Ah... No, my circumstances are a little different from you Senpais. What the goddess told you is correct. There are two heroes, because I'm not a hero.」(Makoto) 「But you were summoned here, right? By her.」(Hibiki)

「Well, yes. Ah, I'm sorry. First, I'll lead the way to our Kusunoha company.」(Makoto) It seems Senpai had some business with our

company from the beginning.

It's better to go there rather than stand around outside and talk like this.

「To the Kuzunoha company? Hmm... I guess so. Well then, I'll impose on you for a little while.」(Hibiki) 「Yes, please feel free. "For a little while", does that mean that you have other important matters to attend to, Senpai?」(Makoto) She was supposed to be heading to Lorel, so I doubt she's particularly free.

Anyhow, I'll try asking her about that.

It looks like our conversation will consist entirely of asking each other questions, but I'm kind of looking forward to it.

She was supposed to have some companions with her, but right now she's alone.

It's strange that she's carrying her sword that's supposed to be her weapon on her back, wrapped in cloth.

Since it's unusual to see people walking around armed in this academy city.

Senpai is a hero, so I'd assume that she's staying at a high-class inn where she wouldn't have to worry about her weapon being stolen. If she left it with them, it'd be easier to walk around.

It'd be safer to carry it if she were planning to go to the more dangerous areas of the city, but then I don't understand why she wouldn't have her companions with her.

For now, as I'm deep in thought about various things, I erase the memory of Senpai's extreme clothing as well as my state upon seeing that from my head.

Because of that, I don't say much during the short time that I'm leading Senpai along.

As if she's thinking about something herself, she simply follows my lead silently.



「And then, I was told that the Kuzunoha company has skilled dwarves.」
(Hibiki) 「So your business with us is that you need your sword repaired. But Senpai, even with our craftsmen, I think it's impossible for it to be finished today.」(Makoto) As I listen to Senpai in the company's drawing room, she explains why she came to academy city in such a hurry.

We also touched on the battle that happened in the royal capital city of Limia, but she hasn't made the connection between the names Shiki or Larva and us. That makes me truly relieved.

The reason she's stopped by in Rotsgard, which isn't directly on the way to Lorel from Limia, is the craftsmen of the Kuzunoha company.

The people of Limia know quite a lot about us, huh.

Either that, or they sent Otonashi-senpai here to make a request for us to work together with the Kingdom of Limia.

Even when she was in Japan, she was the kind of person who could lead others.

Of course, that's still the case now.

She's still the same senpai I admired from afar in Japan.

「I didn't expect that my weapon could be repaired in a day. I'm going to be staying here for another week, so as long as it's finished by then, there won't be any problems. It'd be easy if Beren-san were here, is he currently present?」(Hibiki) Beren?

Why is Beren's name being mentioned here?

「Beren, you say? He's working in our first store in Tsige. Are you acquainted with him?」(Makoto) 「That sword, I had it made for me by Beren-san. Though it looks a bit different to when I first got it from him.」
(Hibiki) Beren made a weapon for Senpai?

A strange relationship has been built without me knowing.

She said she was in Tsige for about a month, so did it happen then?

I'm grateful that she chose us out of all the stores that are available, but if Senpai and her party have been polishing their skills in the wastelands,

it's amazing that we haven't met sooner.

I'm not sure if that's lucky or unlucky.

Anyway, she wasn't given some pre-made product; it's a weapon that was created for her to use.

To think that their relationship is such that she remembers his name properly.

I ignored it back then, so I'll confirm it properly now.

「Please wait a moment. The craftsman who works here will come soon.」
(Makoto) If it's a weapon that Beren made, there'll be no problem with leaving it here.

I can just show it to him in Asora tonight or something.

If he has a whole week, I'm sure Beren can repair a weapon that he made himself.

「Did you call, Waka-sama?」

「Fufu~」(Hibiki)

Senpai is laughing, as if she finds something funny.

When I was greeted by a loud「Welcome back, Waka-sama!」as we returned she was dumbfounded, but it seems she finds it amusing now.

She's reacting like this every time she hears someone call me “Waka-sama”.

I take the sword that's wrapped in cloth from Senpai and hand it to the Eldwa that's come over.

Senpai really is pretty.

Even in this world, she's considered a beautiful woman.

Given that, the other hero is probably attractive as well.

I'm kind of looking forward to meeting him, but it'll also be a pain.

「I want this sword fixed. Confirm whether you can do it or not.」
(Makoto) I make this request to the craftsman as the leader of the

company.

I've been told that it's not good to be overly friendly.

Especially when it comes to demi-humans, even if only in appearance, I should be pulling their strings properly.

It's what Rembrandt-san and Zara-san told me so I just assume they're correct and put it into practice, but it still feels uncomfortable.

「At once. Well then, I shall examine it now.」(Eldwa)

「Please do.」(Hibiki)

A serious expression returns to Senpai's face as she stares at the Eldwa holding the now-exposed sword and bows from her seated position.

She's even more polite than when she's talking to me...

I-I suppose she's Japanese after all; it's important to respect craftsmen, yes.

「It pains me to say this, but it seems that this has been put to use in unreasonable situations. I will work under the assumption that it has seen some fierce battles.」(Eldwa) 「... Yes. It has saved my life many times.」(Hibiki)

The craftsman continues to examine the sword carefully and thoroughly.

I look towards him. He's noticed, so I talk to him through thought transmission.

[She said it's one of Beren's creations. It's fine if we take it back to Asora to show it to him there, so can you just accept it for now?] (Makoto) [This was Beren-dono's creation? I am still inexperienced, to not have noticed right away.] (Eldwa) [Please.] (Makoto)

[I will do as you say.] (Eldwa)

「Otonashi-sama, did you say your name was?」(Eldwa)

「Yes. How is it? Could it be repaired so that I can swing it as I originally did?」(Hibiki) 「There will be no problem. Now that I look closely, it is the creation of one of my colleagues. I believe sufficient work can be done on

it if we are just given three days.」(Eldwa) 「Really! Then can I leave it to you?」(Hibiki)

「That is not for the likes of me to decide. I can make my own judgments, but not choose whether to accept your request.」(Eldwa) The Eldwa quickly glances at me.

I said it's fine.

We don't need to put on these little acts now.

「Of course, we will accept your request. It is a request from none other than my senpai. A fellow Japanese person that I've encountered in this other world.」(Makoto) 「Thanks, Misumi-kun.」(Hibiki)

「Not at all. You may leave, and make sure to handle it with care.」(Makoto) 「Please leave it to me. Well then, Otonashi-sama, I will take care of your weapon.」(Eldwa) Still holding the sword, the Eldwa bows his head low and exits the room. As I watch him leave, I exhale lightly and sink deeply into the sofa.

「As I thought, it was hard for you to maintain that attitude.」(Hibiki) 「I've been taught that when conducting myself as the head of a company, that kind of thing is necessary. You understand, after all?」(Makoto) 「I do. You were the kind of person who couldn't even take that sort of attitude with the kouhais in the club, weren't you?」(Hibiki) 「You are quite knowledgeable. I didn't think you would even remember me.」(Makoto) I was never the type to stand out.

「That might be true for you, Misumi-kun. But the archery club itself stood out a lot. By surviving in that club long enough to become its vice-president, you attracted a certain amount of interest. Ah, weren't you called a hero by some people in Nakakou*?」(Hibiki) TLN*: This is a contraction of the name of their high school, “中津原高校/Nakatsuhara Koukou”.

「... Please don't make me remember such strange things. Even if I'm not really good-looking, is it so strange for me to be in the archery club because I like bows?」(Makoto) I stayed in the archery club for over a year, even though I'm not really attractive. Because of that, I had this nickname

that I wanted to get rid of.

Of course, there were a lot of people who joined the club with their eyes set on the good-looking members, so the first years were put through some tough training as soon as they joined.

That's how they filtered those people out.

With that, quite a lot of the ones that were only in it for the attractive people and had no interest in archery left. Selections were confirmed around fall each year, and the training became less harsh.

The fact that those attractive people survived through that could be called one of the seven wonders of the world.

I think that calling someone a hero just because they survive longer than a year is questionable, though.

Before I realize it, I've been reminiscing about the club and high school for the first time in a while.

「Of course. Hmm, I would definitely like to hear the story of how you came to this world in detail, but...」(Hibiki) 「But?」(Makoto)

「I'm suddenly feeling quite nostalgic now. I can't talk about these things to anyone else, so shall we talk about Japan some more?」(Hibiki) 「Eh?!」(Makoto)

Is that okay?

Talking about Japan would be much more enjoyable for me than being questioned about how I came to this world, so for that I'm grateful.

But this is that Otonashi Hibiki-senpai.

She's flawless in both her knowledge and her fighting skills.

The rumors I hear about her as a hero are nothing short of outstanding.

Is she the kind of person who would have these types of meaningless, reminiscing conversations?

No, I don't think so.

「Oh yeah, this is something that happened quite a while before I came

here, but there was an incident where the president of the archery club and a first-year girl who was rumored to be cute both got mad, right? I'm sure you remember it, since you were in the same club.](Hibiki) ...

I remember it clearly!

Wait, we're starting on a topic that I can't discuss?!

「Don't you know something about that, since you were the vice-president? I'm sure there were things that you couldn't say while you were back there, but now that we're here, there's some kind of physical statute of limitations so you can say them now, right?](Hibiki) What the hell do you mean by physical statute of limitations!

「T-that's...](Makoto)

「I've done everything that I needed to for today. They were all personal matters that I needed to take care of anyway, so I've been moving around separately from everyone else. I've sorted out the matter regarding my sword, as well. I'm sure it'll be good for both of us to think about our memories in Japan.](Hibiki) When Senpai smiles, she really is beautiful.

I somehow remember our social statuses back on earth, and am pressured into simply nodding by the power of her smile.

With this relationship between senpai and kouhai, I get the feeling that I'm not allowed to agree or disagree. At least for me, who was part of a sports-related club.

Well, I don't have to be so cautious when talking about Japan.

The goddess, or Larva.

If I distract her from mentioning those topics, maybe I can settle things by just having a silly, enjoyable conversation between two people from the same town.

My conversation with Senpai, who is both a good speaker and a good listener, is far livelier than I could've imagined.

We sit in the drawing room and have a long, pleasant conversation as we remember our hometown.

Chapter 174: Even more than being a hero

There's a nice smell.

Senpai moved to sit next to me at some point during our conversation. The faint fragrance of her hair is making me feel at ease.

Japan, the wastelands, Tsige...

No matter the topic, Senpai nods as if she's enjoying herself. She told me all kinds of things about her party.

Things like how her male knight's growth is promising but unreliable.

Or how she respects the girl who faces her duties as a priestess head on, even though she is still small.

Or how when she watches the male mage who's married, she realizes that even in another world, even if the husband is strong, men are still controlled by their wives.

She's surrounded by enjoyable companions and things in her country are apparently going well, for the most part.

As one would expect.

In the Limia Kingdom, there have recently been cries for... something like democracy? I've heard a little about people voicing their dissent at the idea of nobles being treated as superior. Senpai tells me they've been gathering followers and slowly making their plans.

Doesn't this mean that she's involved in politics as well? I'm honestly surprised.

As I thought, someone who's been a hero from the start and has become a key figure in the country is really something else.

I'm starting to get curious about the other hero as well.

Hibiki-senpai hasn't given me too many details about him.

She told me it's best if I meet him and talk to him myself.

However, when we were talking about the hero of the empire's power of

charming, Senpai's expression changed.

It became a strange look that showed both surprise and agreement at the same time.

Though it quickly changed back into a smile and our topic of conversation moved once more, so I didn't give it too much thought.

Oh yeah.

The question of how she met Beren and became close to him.

It'll probably be good to hear it from Senpai herself.

I'm a little interested to know how outsiders other than myself perceive Beren.

Our conversation about Tsige ended up switching topics to Tomoe and Mio as well as a lot of discussion about Rembrandt-san, so I didn't get to ask much about that kind of stuff.

「Ah, Hibiki-senpai. When you came to Tsige, how did you come to know Beren –」(Makoto) BANG.

「Eh?」(Makoto)

I let out a stupid-sounding voice in response to the violent opening of the door.

Standing there, holding a tray of drinks is... Mio.

Huh, Mio didn't have to bring them herself; she could've had someone else bring them.

Wait, Tomoe is there as well.

She suddenly pokes her head out from behind Mio with a smile.

Mio is kind of... really angry?

I mean, her eyes have a glassy look.

Her reaction to seeing me talking with other women has become calmer lately, but is she throwing some sort of fit?

「You two, I'm with a visitor. What is it, all of a sudden?」(Makoto) 「My

apologies, Waka. I said to Mio that we should wait at least until your thighs were touching, but it seems that your shoulders were the limit for her.](Tomoe) Tomoe continues smiling as she directs her eyes at the gap between me and Senpai.

Thighs?

Shoulders?

...

Uoh!

Now that she mentions it, I look to see what she's talking about. Senpai was initially just sitting next to me, but now she's really close to me.

Our shoulders are indeed touching!

I was so engrossed in our conversation that I didn't notice!

For us to have been talking while this close without me noticing, I feel like I've been rude towards Senpai...

In any case, now that I've noticed, I put some normal distance between us.

Even if Mio wasn't having a fit, these are indeed circumstances that would make her angry, yes.

I don't have that kind of relationship with Senpai, and we weren't talking about anything romantic.

「Ah, err. Sorry, I didn't notice that kind of thing because I was so caught up in our conversation. I need to apologize to you as well, Hibiki-senpai.」

(Makoto) 「...」(Hibiki)

Huh?

There's no response from Senpai.

She's looking at Mio.

「... Hibiki, it's been a while, hasn't it?」(Mio)

Mio?

You know Senpai?

There's no way that's the case, huh.

They've never been in contact with each other.

「It has been some time, Mio-san. Because Raidou-san turned out to be Misumi-kun, I was half in doubt, but I suppose “Waka-sama” is referring to him after all.」(Hibiki) 「You don't need to tell me why you're here. But I didn't think you were the kind of girl who repaid kindness with ingratitude, you know, Hibiki? I'm grateful for your help with cooking, so I'll let you choose. Your left arm or your right. Which of them do you not need?」(Mio) ?!

Arm?!

「Mio! I was careless! Calm down! This person is my senpai, we came from the same hometown. We just got nostalgic and caught up in talking about the past, that's all, I'm telling you!」(Makoto) What a dangerous thing she is saying!

This isn't her usual light-hearted anger.

It seems that Senpai and Mio are acquainted with each other, but what is this?

And what did she mean by “help with cooking”?

... Cooking.

If I recall, I heard from Mio that she learned some recipes similar to Japanese-style food from an adventurer in Tsige.

But Senpai didn't say a single word about...

Hmm?

「Well, Mio earnestly... Wait, give me this tray.」(Tomoe) As Tomoe says this, she takes the tray that Mio is holding in silence.

Oh, Tomoe and Mio have different degrees of enthusiasm.

「If you're not answering, I'll tear off both of them.」(Mio) 「Mio, stop!」
(Makoto)

I've been sitting between Senpai and Mio from the beginning, so I don't need to move.

I stand up where I am and face Mio.

Why does there have to be bloodshed over such a small thing?!

I'm living a more modest lifestyle than most men in this world, you know?!

「... Waka-sama.」(Mio)

Mio finally stops in her tracks.

Even so, just by being in this room, Senpai is already within Mio's range.

I can't relax.

I'll deploy my magic power armor in an invisible state so I can protect Senpai just in case.

Senpai stands up quietly behind me.

At that moment, I see the evening sun shining through the window.

We started talking just after noon, so we talked for quite a while.

「Mio-san, I had no intentions of doing anything to him. Despite my appearance, I am a hero after all. I don't have the time to be going out with a guy, anyway.」(Hibiki) She's perfectly right.

To be a hero and still have time to flirt with a lover, you'd need to be very skillful indeed.

I'm not even one of her party members; if Senpai and I were to date, it would have to be a long-distance relationship, right?

Not that there's any way Senpai would consider someone like me in the first place.

「Hero? I couldn't care less about something like that. Hibiki, are you saying you have no interest at all? Your expression said differently earlier. Weren't you being quite flirtatious?」(Mio) Couldn't care less, huh.

Normally you'd have more of a reaction to a girl standing before your

eyes telling you “I’m a hero”.

However.

Th-that’s quite a cold tone.

What do you mean by “flirtatious”, it’s not like we’re animals with an uncontrollable urge to breed.

「I was able to meet my cute kouhai, that’s all. The sword that I received when I met you, Mio-san, I came to have it repaired and happened to meet him by coincidence.」(Hibiki) 「That right! It was a coincidence! She is acquainted to you and Beren for some reason, and she happened to come to the Kuzunoha company and ran into me by pure coincidence! Do you understand?」(Makoto) 「... For over three hours?」(Mio)

「Uh, w-we got caught up in talking.」(Makoto)

「Waka-sama, when there were meetings that went for three hours you would fall asleep. Yet you had an enjoyable conversation that you got caught up in for even longer than that?」(Mio) Guh.

The times I fell asleep just coincided with the times when I was the most busy, didn’t they?

Mio is being quite malicious today.

But I’m sorry.

I’ll be careful.

「Really, I’m sorry. I lost track of the time. This person and I have a senpai-kouhai relationship, nothing more.」(Makoto) 「Yes. We went to the same school, but we barely even knew each other’s names. I was in quite a high social position in that world, so I got ahead of myself without thinking. I was being inconsiderate of you, Mio-san, I’m sorry.」(Hibiki)
Hibiki-senpai lowers her head.

I don’t know the relationship between the two, but is Senpai the weaker one?

If they met in Tsige, were Senpai and her party among the babysitters in the wasteland?

I won't know if I don't ask about it later.

Thought transmission is blocked, so I can't ask anyway?

It's pretty hard to gain Mio's favor here.

I'm quite depressed.

「...」(Mio)

「Look, you've said this much to Waka already, you cannot be angry forever.」(Tomoe) Thanks, Tomoe.

For some reason, thought transmission isn't working on you either, but I can assume you're not angry?

「... Waka-sama, Ema is calling. Also, there are a few things that I would like you to sample, so let us head to the mansion.」(Mio) 「I-I see. Well, then, Senpai. Please take care on your way to Lorel.」(Makoto) 「... Yes. Joshua-sama wanted to get in touch with you, so would you please contact him in the near future?」(Hibiki) 「Ah, I understand. I'll do that in a few days' time.」(Makoto) 「Please do.」(Hibiki)

「Waka-sama!」(Mio)

Mio's voice is sharp.

I have to hurry.

「Let us be on our way... He shouldn't have given her that sword, mumble mumble...」(Mio) As I walk towards Mio and Tomoe, who are standing at the door that was wrenched open, Mio starts to rush me even more.

She's saying something inappropriate, too.

That sword of Beren's, Mio had something to do with it as well, huh.

「Waka, please leave the hero in my care. Allow me escort her back.」(Tomoe) 「Tomoe? I don't think you need to worry about Senpai that much, you know?」(Makoto) 「No no, it is just that she is a guest of the Kuzunoha company. We must treat her properly. Lime is busy at the moment and I, fortunately, happen to have some free time.」(Tomoe) 「Her left and right arms are off-limits, alright?」(Makoto) 「Please do not treat

me like I am the same as Mio. We will just have a small conversation. I will not harm her.」(Tomoe) 「In that case, I'll leave that to you.」(Makoto)

「As you wish.」(Tomoe)

It seems Tomoe isn't that angry, so I guess it should be fine.

!

Could she be planning to look through Senpai's memories?

Senpai has knowledge on some things that I don't, so it's possible.

Should I stop her?

No.

If the depths of Asora's knowledge isn't seen, then it won't be found, I suppose.

... I wonder why.

Maybe it's because all of my own memories have been exposed; I feel a little reluctant to let it happen to someone else.

I have to change my way of thinking on these kinds of things.

I leave the company room together with Mio and head for Asora.

At this time of day, we can have a short break and still be able to return to the company before dinner, huh.

We can close the shop and check our inventory then.



TLN: This section is now switched to Tomoe's point of view, which is immediately apparent in Japanese but not in English, so I'm leaving this TLN here to clarify that.

Ooh.

Organizing information is a hectic thing.

Waka and Mio have returned to Asora, and I am accompanying the hero of Limia, Otonashi Hibiki, along the street as I told Waka I would.

She was sitting so close to Waka in the drawing room, but she did not show any expression of having an ulterior motive. Finding out exactly what this girl gained from that conversation is one of my objectives.

I'm secretly looking through her memories, but from the conversation with Waka earlier, it seems she has gathered most of the available information about Waka as Raidou of the Kusunoha company.

「Err, Tomoe-san? I'll be fine on my own.」(Hibiki)

「I am not sure if you are aware, hero-dono, but this city recently suffered great damage at the hands of monsters known as mutants. I cannot allow even the smallest chance of something happening to a guest of Waka's. Please forgive me.」(Tomoe) 「I see... Umm, Tomoe-san, are you also one of Misumi-kun's subordinates?」(Hibiki) 「Of course. Ah yes, hero-dono, I think you have heard that Waka is using the false name, "Raidou". When you refer to Waka, please use either Misumi or Raidou. Since using the name "Makoto" would only invite chaos.」(Tomoe) 「I know. He told me the same. Well, I heard about this company that started in the wasteland, but you really do employ many demi-humans, don't you?」(Hibiki) Hmm.

To start with, I have been predominantly examining her memories of their earlier conversation.

Waka, you said quite a lot.

Though you were made to talk.

You seemed to have excluded your relationship with the goddess, but you talked about the wasteland, Tsige and Rotsgard.

You have given a considerable amount of information to this girl.

You have managed to keep quiet about Shiki, who she is acquainted with, and Asora. But you have talked a great deal about the academy lecturers and the mutant attack.

Hmm, Ilumgand?

If I recall, that was the student that began the attack.

It seems that she is quite concerned about him, but even Waka does not

know everything about that matter.

It seems that this girl, Hibiki, tried to learn something about that student but quickly gave up.

Even we have not got a full grasp of their relationship.

The students did about 80% of the damage, and Mio finished him off, huh?

All Waka knows is that the students defeated him.

The only ones who know about how he was finished are Mio and myself.

I should poke around this topic.

It would be troublesome if we allowed it to be an issue in the future.

Whatever the case may be, I am relieved that they seem not to have touched on the topic of Waka and Shiki going wild in Limia.

For some reason, in Hibiki's mind, she has decided that the person dressed in a white suit is a hyuman.

I'll find out how she came to that conclusion later.

Because Hibiki believes Waka is a human, she believes them to be two different people.

... But this is a little dangerous.

Waka has given enough information to Hibiki that she could assume that his parents were hyumans.

If we are not careful, she could come to that conclusion.

「Waka does not discriminate against demi-humans, so he can truly appreciate their great abilities. That is one reason. Since you are from the same town as him, hero-dono, would you not think the same?」(Tomoe)
「... Yes, at first. But as I learn of this world's customs and traditions, I realize that people who think like me are in the minority. I think that the relationship between humans and demi-humans is one of the problems that cause wars, but what we need to immediately deal with is the war that is happening right now. I will not condone the hyumans' attitude towards

demi-humans, but I will not outright deny it, either.」(Hibiki) 「So you tolerate their behavior.」(Tomoe)

That is a safe thing to do.

Even though Waka and Hibiki both lived in Japan, they have quite different ways of thinking.

「Though my common sense still hinders me in that regard. For us, demi-humans are just people who have different features like a tail or ears. But humans view them as servants and... to say it bluntly, livestock.」(Hibiki)
「Yes, you have a point.」(Tomoe)

「No matter how beneficial demi-humans are to humans, humans rarely acknowledge the rights of demi-humans. I've noticed recently that Misumi-kun treating demi-humans so well is causing him to be seen as some kind of unusual pet enthusiast. As a hero, it is difficult to conduct myself that way.」(Hibiki) 「For someone who exudes charisma, that is quite a calculative thing to say, hero-dono.」(Tomoe) 「It's exactly as you say. I am a calculative, shrewd person. The aristocracy in Limia must be reformed and the empire must be held back through diplomacy before I can raise the societal status of demi-humans. Of course, this is assuming that we win the war.」(Hibiki) 「You desire a lot, hero-dono. You are different to what I imagined, but I do not dislike that. I see. Well, I can confirm that there was a passionate supporter in this city.」(Tomoe) I suppose I will begin now.

「A supporter, you say? Supporting me? I am happy to hear that there are such people, even in this academy city that is so far from the kingdom.」(Hibiki) 「Indeed. He is deceased now, but he was an academy student. The second son of the Hoperaise* family from Limia, a boy by the name of Ilumgand. He had quite a troublesome personality, but he had considerable faith in you, hero-dono.」(Tomoe) TLN*: Was previously translated by Reigokai as Hopelace 「!」(Hibiki)

「But he was in quite a bad temper before the school festival. In the end, he turned into a monster during a team competition and began attacking the other students. If I recall, the king of your country also saw this

incident.」(Tomoe) Hooh.

So Ilumgand was acquainted with Hibiki.

Fu, he is speaking of his ideals with shining, innocent eyes.

They met when Hibiki was acting to remind the kingdom's nobles of their duties.

The little I saw of Ilumgand was after he had already lost his sanity, but I understand now. The Ilumgand in Hibiki's memories is indeed a respectable young man.

It seems that he was passionate about his ideals, enthusiastic in lectures and wanted to be of use to the hero once he graduated.

Words coming from a face whose expression is full of admiration cannot be lies.

I am curious as to why he turned insane and was killed.

「... Did Ilum-kun, Ilumgand, really do such coward-like acts, go on a rampage and finally get eliminated?」(Hibiki) 「There is no mistake. Waka also saw it. There may have been a reason for it, but it was something that Ilumgand caused himself. His strange behavior prior to that is also known by other academy students and employees of the Kusunoha company.」(Tomoe) 「Even everyone in the Kusunoha company?」(Hibiki)

「Indeed. Because for some reason, he saw Waka as his mortal enemy and interfered with his activities. He pressured the guild, used companies in Limia to harass Waka and even disturbed his students. I pity the students who were affected by that.」(Tomoe) 「... He was one of my sympathizers. Among the nobles, he was a rare person who put proper thought towards the well-being of the people. The Hoperaise family is mourning his passing.」(Hibiki) 「One's reputation can change many times in the eyes of the people. But if he had such a side to him, it is unfortunate that he was lost.」(Tomoe) 「No matter what, I can't bring myself to believe he transformed like that.」(Hibiki) 「Both the academy and the kingdom of Limia are investigating the cause. I am sure the truth will be revealed eventually.」(Tomoe) 「I think there was definitely something that caused

it.」(Hibiki) ... She has no proof, but she believes there was a cause.

Is it some kind of intuition?

However, she is right.

Whether she will have the chance to find out just what kind of intervention the demons are capable of is another matter.

Fufu, and this is...

I've found something good.

This girl has learned kendo and swordsmanship!

This is good.

I may be able to touch on real swordsmanship.

「Hero-dono, if I recall, you were planning to leave the academy city?」
(Tomoe) 「Huh, ah, yes. That's right. Coming here was a decision that I made independently.」(Hibiki) Hibiki is surprised by this abrupt change in conversation topic.

But I am also surprised.

Why did you and Waka learn swordsmanship from the same person?

And neither you nor Waka are aware of this.

I think I can see even more of their teacher's swordsmanship in her memories than Waka's.

What a stroke of good fortune this is.

「From the fact that you left a sword in our care, can I assume that you are a master of the sword?」(Tomoe) 「I don't have it with me, but I've left a sword with the academy. Bastard swords are the easiest to use, aren't they?」(Hibiki) I do not have any interest in such swords.

「Since you are from the same town as Waka, can you use a katana?」
(Tomoe) 「Katana...」(Hibiki)

Hibiki looks at the sword at my waist.

Has she sensed it?

I will not allow you to refuse.

I did defend you from Mio, though only through words.

「I did learn how to use Japanese katanas in my hometown. Speaking of which, Tomoe-san, you give off the impression of a samurai. Are there samurai and Japanese katanas in this world as well?」(Hibiki) 「No, this is just a hobby of mine. Since learning about this from Waka, I have been completely caught up in it.」(Tomoe) 「Hobby? Huh, I see.」(Hibiki)

「I would like to humbly request instruction!」(Tomoe)

「From me?! Err, if you are as strong as Mio-san, then you are far stronger than I am.」(Hibiki) 「A contest between swordswomen. I will prepare a katana for you. There are plenty of suitable places at the academy and I will not take much of your time!」(Tomoe) Techniques with a Japanese sword.

I can see the details in Hibiki's memories, but nothing could be better than seeing it in person.

「But I would like to hurry and meet up with everyone else...」(Hibiki) 「Then I shall escort you there after our contest! It is decided, let us go, hero-dono!」(Tomoe) Muh!

What do you mean by,「She is just a companion of Mio, they're two similar people」?!

How dare you remember something so rude!

Even if I make selfish requests such as these, I make sure to prepare benefits for my opponents as well!

Chapter 175: Troubling matters

「Hey, Onee-chan? What's wrong? Weren't you supposed to come back tomorrow?」(Chiya) Hibiki replies with an embarrassed look on her face.

「... That was the plan. But it looks like I've caught up with you.」(Hibiki)
「Did your business in Rotsgard go well?」(Chiya)

「Yes. We were supposed to gather just before we enter Lorel, but now it looks like I can enjoy the view of the Gold Highway.」(Hibiki) 「Being together with Onee-chan makes me happy!」(Chiya)

「Me too. Ah, sorry, Chiya-chan. I was busy today, so I'll go to bed first.」(Hibiki) 「Mhmm, see you tomorrow. Good night.」(Chiya)

Hibiki's face does indeed look a little pale. As Chiya sees her off, she assumes it is just fatigue.

Hibiki hired an extra room in the inn, some distance away from the rest of her party. She enters the room and throws herself onto the bed.

She lets out a large sigh.

(The inside of my head feels like mush. I did everything I needed to do in Rotsgard, but the final matter with the Kusunoha company really wore me out. I'm thankful for the restoration of the kingdom and the fact that we managed to negotiate for command over the academy's mage corps, but to think that there was another Japanese person here other than that from the empire. Someone I know, even. At this rate, I can use our senpai-kouhai relationship from when we were in Japan to hear reliable information from him. But his identity as Raidou is problematic. He's the representative of a company with unknown influence. Even his majesty and Joshua-sama acknowledge their power. It seems they want to have the company as their ally, but...) Hibiki considers the information she gained in her conversation with Raidou, AKA Makoto, in relation to what she already knew about the Kusunoha company.

(He was hiding it, but the reason he's using a fake name is because he doesn't want his whereabouts to be known by the goddess, right? I didn't

feel a shred of respect for her in his words. I was summoned in a castle, but he told me that he was summoned at some corner of the world. It's probably true, but if that's the case then it's basically indirect murder. Which means that it's quite likely that Misumi-kun and the goddess don't have a good relationship. Is it alright to accept someone like that as an ally? That company's equipment and Mio-san are absolutely excellent. I wonder what I should do. I'm not worried about him as much as Tomoki, but imagining what could happen after the war, Misumi-kun's existence is...) When the war between humans and demons eventually reaches a conclusion, anyone who endangers the kingdom of Limia's existence would be undesirable.

For Hibiki, who thinks that the goddess's system should continue in this world even after the war, Makoto seems like he could become an attractive source of military power. But at the same time, she thinks he has shown some signs that he could become a source of evil.

(There's no doubt that Tomoki will set out to unite the world after the demons are defeated. It would be impressive if those ambitions that he put no effort into hiding were only a bluff, but I'm sure that's not the case. If I were to ask Misumi-kun for assistance and he turned out to be the goddess's enemy, it is quite possible that it would become a great reason for the empire to start a war between humans. That would be bad. We don't even know if we'll win the war against the demons, but that doesn't mean that we can just focus on what's in front of us and hope for the best. So the safest option is to associate with them purely just as a company at first, then slowly request military power. Even then, a request from just Limia and myself is a hand we can only play in a situation where we have no other choice.) She knows that the Kusunoha company is powerful.

Hibiki has seen that first hand.

Hibiki considers a truly ideal scenario where, just as the demons are brought to the brink of annihilation, the Kusunoha company would use the Devil to face the empire, have the two destroy each other and then be defeated.

She might appear heartless in comparison to Makoto, even though they

are both Japanese. But during their conversation, Makoto did not give any impression of being on either the humans' side or the demons' side. Hibiki has an ominous feeling about him that will not disappear. So she has decided that as a hero, she should make her decisions without taking into account her personal feelings.

Her decisions have too much impact for her to think things like "I will believe him because I know him" or "I can relax because we went to the same high school".

(We don't even know the background behind Larva and that white guy. This is just a hunch, but the one who blew away Stella is that white Devil. I thought I could get some kind of lead on him if I came to the academy city, but I suppose it's impossible to get that sort of information in only one day. I have a feeling I can figure something out in Lorel as well, so there's still some hope. With regards to Misumi-kun, Joshua-sama is summoning him and I have to return to the kingdom as well, so I'll meet him in the kingdom in the near future and ascertain his standpoint there. It's not a good idea to investigate too much right now, since that person called Tomoe-san gave me a warning.) Hibiki remembers the blue-haired woman who is the very reason she was able to meet up with her party so quickly in the first place.

She is confused as to what to think about Tomoe.

(She should probably be about as strong as Mio-san. She was someone I can't understand no matter how hard I try. She seemed to know the basic way of handling a katana, but she's either never been through a competition between katana-users or she's just inexperienced at fighting. Even so, her stance was quite solid. Ah, that's what it reminds me of. It felt like a staged sword fight. What exactly has she been doing to learn how to use a sword like that? I don't understand her. I don't think Misumi-kun has any understanding of kendo or swordsmanship, but I wonder if you would be able to have such a solid foundation just by hearing a report on how it's done. That company has far too many secrets.) After Tomoe had insisted on it, they spent almost an hour at the academy having a contest with katanas.

The only magic they used were strengthening magic and healing magic, so it was a true contest of sword techniques. Hibiki won nine out of ten matches.

Tomoe's powerful technique that made use of her physical ability had taken Hibiki by surprise initially, but Hibiki won the rest of the matches afterwards.

To Hibiki, who has studied kendo for a long time and even learned proper swordsmanship, Tomoe was but an inexperienced swordswoman.

However.

(She recovered straight away even after I cut her, didn't she? Though she did say that she had prepared healing magic in advance.) It was a truly spectacular magic.

To the point that Hibiki unconsciously watched her in fascination.

After a deep blow that Hibiki had thought might even endanger Tomoe's life, Tomoe had stood up as if nothing had happened. Hibiki was completely shocked.

Hibiki had immediately decided to make it one of her objectives to find out whether Tomoe would be able to demonstrate such an ability a second time.

Tomoe did give her an explanation.

She willingly explained to Hibiki how the magic works.

It was not exactly a deal they agreed upon, but in exchange, Hibiki taught Tomoe a way to train the Japanese sword's iai*.

TLN*: This is the art of drawing your sword, cutting down your opponent with the same movement and then sheathing the sword afterwards.

(As a swordswoman, her physical strength is terrifying, but not particularly special otherwise. She probably normally uses magic to fight. I defeated her that many times and yet she wasn't even upset about it. But more importantly...) Tomoe, Mio, Makoto.

And Larva, whom she might be able to find clues about in Lorel.

In addition to that, the restoration of the kingdom, the empire's movements and the war with the demons.

Even though she is exhausted, Hibiki does not stop thinking about the various subjects that float into her mind as she goes through a sleepless night.



I'm naïve to think that winter would stop the development of the land.

Are you serious?

Ema is in a bad mood, which is unusual for her. After hearing the situation, it seems she is unhappy that Kaleneon's farmable land is expanding slower than expected.

Apparently I'm naïve for believing that snow falling on the land is a valid reason for that.

Kaleneon's a northern, inland area with lots of mountains, so my only thought was that it would be unreasonable to try to develop the land during the winter.

According to the Super Secretary Ema, it wouldn't be a problem if magic was used.

I had this thought during the restoration of Rotsgard as well, but we're in a situation where we have to use magic for all kinds of work.

... There's no shortage of workers capable of that among the demi-humans that are temporarily working in Kaleneon, but still...

I asked Root to secretly move hyuman and demi-human adventurers that pass certain requirements to Kaleneon as immigrants. It's normal for those kinds of people to have a lifestyle where they're doing some work on the side, anyway.

I need more information than just what Ema has told me, so I'll make a decision on how to deal with the situation after I hear from the Anslan sisters in Kaleneon.

More importantly, I need to focus on the present.

「Tomoe, explain. What's with those torn-up clothes?」(Makoto)

This is the problem at hand right now.

「How good of you to ask! I asked the hero Hibiki to demonstrate her knowledge of true swordsmanship. Well, we had a small contest. These are wounds of honor, so to speak!」(Tomoe) 「Where is the honor in having a contest for your hobby?」(Makoto) 「Let us not worry about the small details! She was amazing, Waka. Her sword moved like this so quickly, and in the next instant, it was slashing back at me! I think that the trick to this would be to use the wrist and the back. It really surprised me!」(Tomoe) 「... It's amazing that only your clothes got torn.」(Makoto)

「No? My blood scattered through the air multiple times. I was healing at the same time, so it was not a problem. Though I cannot repair my clothing, so that is why I am in this state.」(Tomoe) Tomoe touches her torn clothes. She seems like she's enjoying herself.

They fought each other with real swords...

「Weren't you supposed to stop Senpai from being exposed to danger?!」(Makoto) 「Of course. I did not use most of my magic and we fought only using swords; in my current state, there is no way I can land an attack on her.」(Tomoe) 「So you thought it would be fine because you can't hit her, seriously, you. It's not just a matter of healing yourself when you get cut, is it?! Do you think I'd find it interesting to imagine you being cut?」(Makoto) There's no way I'd find that interesting.

I'd be worried instead!

「Muh, that's... It was a little rash of me.」(Tomoe)

「Katana this, katana that. I know I can't give you a match using a katana. But take care of yourself a little more! You understand me?!」(Makoto) 「I will be certain to take care from now on.」(Tomoe)

「Good.」(Makoto)

Now that I see Tomoe seriously reflecting on her actions, I'll forgive her.

「So? What happened to Senpai?」(Makoto)

「It seems that her main objectives were to secure the academy's cooperation to assist with the restoration of the kingdom, as well as the assistance of our company, which she also has business with.」(Tomoe)
「Tomoe-san! What's with your appearance! You told me to calm down, and then you went and punished Hibiki, didn't you?! Isn't that unfair?!」
(Mio) Mio has barged in, right in the middle of Tomoe's explanation.

In her hand is... an octopus?

She's holding a bright-red octopus.

Boiled whole?

Even for a new dish, that's quite amazing.

But octopus, huh.

「I just fell over! It has nothing to do with Hibiki!」(Tomoe)

「Where would you have to fall for your clothes to be cut to ribbons like that?! If you are going to play dumb, please think of a better excuse! I had things I wanted to say to Hibiki as well, but I held myself back! If you are going to do such things, Tomoe-san, then I will do as I please as well!」

(Mio) Oi!

「Unfortunately, Hibiki is no longer in Rotsgard. I politely escorted her back to her party.」(Tomoe) 「... Waka-sama! Tomoe-san is horrible!」(Mio)

「Ah, jeez. I already scolded Tomoe a little while ago. Oh, that octopus looks delicious. Did you boil it?」(Makoto) 「Octopus? A-ah. I am just checking the salt seasoning, but it has been boiled quite well. I would certainly like Waka-sama to try it.」(Mio) Mio is even explaining how she cooked it.

「Waka, you have grown used to dealing with Mio. That is very reassuring.」(Tomoe) 「As for you, go and get changed first. You know that Mio and Shiki have been obsessed with seafood cuisine these days, don't you? Let's eat together. I'll hear your detailed explanation then.」(Makoto)
Mio and Shiki have been going to port cities recently to stock up on seafood.

I sometimes participate in the cooking if they're using ingredients that I'm familiar with.

Mio wants to increase her number of seafood recipes and Shiki apparently wants to collaborate with Gotetsu and do research into making nabe with seafood. Their interests coincide, so they often go out together.

Shiki was in high spirits today, saying that he'd be putting crab in a nabe.

He's holed himself up in Asora's kitchen, going through a trial-and-error process to test out different combinations of various soups and vegetables.

He was enthusiastically combining the different soups that he received from Gotetsu.

I say he's combining them, but it feels more like a drug manufacturing process. I'm looking forward to the final product.

「Shiki is making a nabe today, correct? It seems much more promising than Mio, who merely boiled her ingredient. I am looking forward to it.」
(Tomoe) 「... Merely boiled?」(Mio)

Mio's eyebrows are raised.

Oh man, should I follow up on this?

I cut one of the legs of the octopus that Mio has brought and hold it in my hand.

「... Tomoe.」(Makoto)

「Huh? ... Mugh!」(Tomoe)

「Is this the taste of something that has been merely boiled?」(Makoto)
「... This is delicious. Hmm.」(Tomoe)

「Is there something you'd like to say to Mio?」(Makoto)

「... Mio, I apologize. This is very delicious. I am sorry for saying that it has been merely boiled.」(Tomoe) Tomoe earnestly bows her head in apology.

「... It is fine as long as you understand. I have other dishes prepared, so

you can look forward to them as well.」(Mio) Octopus, huh.

Excellent!

「By the way, Mio. What dishes are you planning to use an octopus for?」
(Makoto) 「Let's see...」(Mio)

Mio lists out her planned menu for me.

She's not listing anything that I can make.

Let's add two items to the dining table.

There's still time for that.

「Well then, I'll make something too.」(Makoto)

「Oh! It has been a while!」(Tomoe)

「What kind of dish will it be?」(Mio)

「One will be the nabe and the other will be a dish using flour. Tako-shabu and takoyaki!」(Makoto) TLN: タコ/Tako = octopus. シャブ/Shabu is a shortened form シャブシャブ/shabu-shabu, which is a type of nabe/hot pot dish that typically has thin slices of meat. Takoyaki is balls of flour batter filled with octopus. And now I'm hungry.

Shiki will probably enjoy it, since it's a nabe.

I've never showed them a shabu-shabu before, so it should be fresh for them.

Mio is always interested in new dishes no matter what they are.

Tomoe is looking forward to my cooking as well.

This is also my chance to redeem myself.

I remember the time I asked the Dwarves to make me an iron plate to make takoyaki with.

It's a bitter memory.

I'd prepared the ingredients before realizing.

I had no octopus.

Nobody was selling them at all. I wanted to cry.

In the end, I used shreds of chicken meat to make toriyaki*, but I felt a true sense of defeat that time.

TLN*: トリ/Tori = bird, so toriyaki is what he has named this failed dish which is basically takoyaki with chicken in place of the octopus. Don't see what wrong with it, sounds delicious to me.

I couldn't show anyone my failure, so I ended up eating it all by myself.

I can finally sweep away my trauma.

Now then, let's go to the kitchen.

Chapter 176: Feeling as if in a dream

「Welcome to the Lorel Union. We are honored by your presence, hero Hibiki-sama.」(Sairitsu) A woman wearing a robe bows her head respectfully as she offers words of welcome to her guest.

As Hibiki thanks the woman for her kind words, she senses a coldness to the woman's behavior.

It is very faint, and has completely vanished by the time the woman speaks her next words, so Hibiki decides to overlook it for now.

「Welcome back, Chiya-sama. You are aware that everyone has been anticipating the priestess-sama's return?」(Sairitsu) 「Sorry it's taken me so long, Sai. It'll only be for a little while, but I've come back together with Onee-chan. Hey, Sai. Hibiki-onee-chan –」(Chiya) 「Chiya-sama, I would love to listen to such details leisurely at a later time. For now, I am sure you are tired from your long journey, so we will now lead you to the rooms that everyone will be staying in.」(Sairitsu) The one who has come out to meet the hero, the visitor from Limia, is Sairitsu, one of Lorel's influential people.

The existence of Lorel's priestess is openly known to the public, and the people adore her.

Sairitsu has significant power, holding a position where she governs those around her.

She is a representative worthy of being sent to welcome important visitors from other countries.

The religious importance of the priestess makes Sairitsu's position much more influential than it originally was.

She is “strong” in various ways that exceed Misumi Makoto's impression of her as a powerful leader in her country.

She looks at her subordinates, signalling for them to begin leading the guests. As she watches the hero, the priestess and their companions leave, she confirms her plans with another subordinate.

「Sairitsu-sama? Is there something wrong?」

「... I just thought, we wished for the priestess's return to our country so desperately, however.」(Sairitsu) 「The diplomacy employed by everyone, including yourself, Sairitsu-sama, is showing results.」

「... If that really were the case, I would be feeling happier.」(Sairitsu)
「Sairitsu-sama, Chiya-sama has returned, so I think it is best not to worry so much. In the same way that Limia treated our country, if we have the priestess-sama stay in Lorel from now on, that will be -」

「You. If one only thinks of returning the treatment that one has been dealt without considering the time and situation, it will lead to the worst possible outcome. Be sure to engrave this lesson into your mind. At the very least, we will not be able to do it on this occasion. Though if Chiya-sama is forced to take part in the war, there will be plenty of opportunities.」(Sairitsu) 「M-my apologies. I have said too much.」

「There is also everything that has occurred until now. I do not condemn you for feeling animosity towards Limia. But the reality is that Chiya-sama strongly supports the hero from the bottom of her heart. She came here "for a little while" of her own volition. The thing I am more worried about is...」(Sairitsu) (That would be the fact that when Raidou requested the Dragon Knights prolong their stay in Rotsgard to help the city's restoration, it felt more like he was making a demand. "I may be able to meet the priestess-sama soon", huh... Even though Limia and Lorel are both considered part of the four great powers, I do not believe them to be equal. But we are still a great country; even diplomatic measures would not grant him what he requested, yet he got what he wanted so easily... I would like to have Chiya-sama examine him once. I wonder if I should have her stop by Rotsgard on her way back. It seems that she has already realized that the hero Hibiki is a wise person; maybe she could find something out about Raidou. Fu, if he thought those words were merely to console me, how relieved he must be.) 「Sairitsu-sama?」

「... It is nothing. Things will be busy from now on. I will be relying on you.」(Sairitsu) 「Please leave it to me! I will serve Chiya-sama with everything I have!」

「Well then, let us go.」(Sairitsu)

Sairitsu remembers the person she met in Rotsgard not long ago.

His suggestion to have the Dragon Knights stay to help with the city's restoration, and his offer in return.

There is no way a single company would have the power to influence the movements of the hero or the priestess, let alone an entire great country.

Normally, this would be the case.

Currently, the priestess has made her anticipated return to Lorel and brought the hero with her.

Though it is temporary, this is still a major event.

She must not focus all of her attention on that.

Even so.

Sairitsu cannot erase Raidou's name and the Kuzunoha company from her mind.



TLN: This section will be really confusing without a TLN, so I shall add one. In this section, there are TWO Makotos - one who is watching the scene and whose perspective the narrative is from, and one who is participating in the scene. The author doesn't distinguish which is which in the text and simply uses pronouns like "I/me/my" for both, which can be slightly confusing, but hopefully you won't have too much trouble following it.

I was there.

「You weren't a hyuman after all.」(Makoto)

「You, monster.」

「I don't think I want to be called that by you, since you're still talking despite the large hole in your stomach.」(Makoto) 「I must not allow you to meet Hibiki-sama...! No matter the cost, I will stop you here...!」

I'm facing a guy wearing black armor.

But he's kneeling and has a large hole in his stomach, like I said.

From the way he's speaking, I think I probably did it.

So, is this guy one of Senpai's acquaintances?

「A black knight, huh. Is this the supposed loyalty of a knight?」(Makoto)
A black knight.

I've never heard of them.

But it seems he knows me.

I look at that place in a really absentminded way.

It's like there's one me who is the performer, and another me who's the audience.

The heavily wounded person who's apparently a black knight has had his solid-looking helmet broken to reveal the face of a demi-human, not a hyuman. No, his face is a "wrinkled yet smooth" face that might not even be that of a demi-human.

「Raidou, no matter what, I will stop you here!」(Black knight) A
greatsword that would be better suited for smashing rather than cutting
its target is being swung down at me.

I stop it with my bare hands.

I'm not even using my magic power armor.

I just grabbed the sword with my hands and stopped it.

No way, I shouldn't be able to do something like this.

It was travelling quite fast, wasn't it?

「Hey, do you know what a microwave oven is?」(Makoto)
「Microwave...?」(Black knight)

「Ahaha, sorry, sorry. Forget it. Oh yeah. Could you tell me your name?
Surely your name isn't "black knight"?」(Makoto) I hear my voice that has
no hints of tension in it.

There are two of me; this is a strange sensation.

The surroundings...

I look around anxiously.

There is rubble scattered everywhere, and the air is filled with fire, smoke and noise.

It's a battlefield.

「My name, you say? Fu, kukukuku! You do not know? You should have seen many, many others with the same unsightly appearance as me at that place! And you buried them all!」(Black knight) The black knight points at himself as he shouts the word “unsightly”.

「... I don't know. I don't remember. What, do you have some kind of grudge against me?」(Makoto) 「The academy city! Rotsgard! The school festival! Are you going to say you have even forgotten all of those, Raidou?!」(Black knight) 「Ah, the mutants, huh. In fact, you're kind of similar to them. So you're one of the mutants who survived? But you know, the ones who transformed in that incident were just suffering the consequences of their own actions in a way, weren't they? I don't think it's reasonable to have a grudge against me, is it?」(Makoto) 「I am...」(Black knight)

「Huh?」(Makoto)

「I am Ilumgand Hoperaise!」(Ilumgand)

?!

Ilumgand?!

Huh, but if I recall, he was supposed to have been killed during the school festival by Amelia...

「Ilumgand, huh. The mutant attack itself is a thing of the past, so I don't really remember individual names. But Ilumgand Hoperaise, right. I got it.」(Makoto) But perhaps I really don't remember his name; as I face Ilumhand, I don't seem to have any particularly strong reaction.

I wonder what this bad feeling I'm getting is.

「You, how far do you have to go to make fools of people before you...!」

(Illumgand) 「Despite being ridiculously tough, it looks like you can't fix that hole in your stomach, so this is the end of the show. I'll make sure to finish you properly. Now there's nobody left in Senpai's party except that priestess, and even though I'm clumsy, I can finally put her into checkmate.」(Makoto) Checkmate?

Senpai's party?

What kind of situation is this?

Despite the strangeness of these circumstances, the me standing there doesn't question anything as he extends his left hand towards the black knight.

「You would tell me in advance that you intend to finish me?!」
(Illumgand) Illumgand kicks the dirt as he tries to escape from the palm that is coming towards him.

But he snaps back to his original position, as if colliding with something, and stumbles.

Is that a barrier?

But its range doesn't include my surroundings.

It looks like it's been set up to act as a wall that encloses Illumgand completely.

What is that, isn't that unfair?!

A barrier that doesn't have the caster at its center, that's some super-evil skill, you know?!

「Back to my earlier topic, the microwave oven. It's a tool used to heat up food.」(Makoto) 「Why... How can someone like you possess so much power?! Someone like you, who does not hold any faith!」(Illumgand) 「At first, I thought "wow, the inside of the oven gets really hot~", you know? But that's not what happens. These wave-like things cause tiny vibrations in whatever's inside, or something? It's quite amazing technology.」
(Makoto) Ah, I've heard something like this before.

It causes the molecules to vibrate, I think?

Even though it's a familiar, convenient household appliance, I remember being amazed that it's such a complicated thing.

Though it's only a vague memory of having seen this explanation on television or something.

But what is this me thinking, saying such things in another world, to an enemy, no less?

As this question occurs to me, he says something strange.

「Well then, what do you think would happen if you did that to a person?」(Makoto) 「... I do not know what you are trying to say. Are you trying to tell me that you want to burn me to death?」(Illumgand) 「That's what you'd assume would happen, right? Either that, or you'd think that it'd be something like being boiled to death. But that's not quite right. It's like being disintegrated through something like magic, but there's no need to deal with a corpse afterwards.」(Makoto) Something like magic, huh.

He's referring to the barrier, I guess.

Still.

Hey, hey.

What would happen if you put someone in a microwave?

What a vulgar way to kill someone.

I've never even imagined that before.

「... Be sure to remember this. You will definitely receive your punishment. Hibiki-sama or the goddess-sama will definitely punish you. The world will never acknowledge you.」(Illumgand) 「I'd be happy about that. If they were to come to me, it'd save me a lot of trouble. Well then, bye-bye.」(Makoto) 「Illum-kun!」

Unbelievably, a woman's voice calling Illumgand's name comes with perfect timing.

「Ah, Hibiki-senpai.」(Makoto)

The owner of the voice is Senpai.

I call out Senpai's name as if nothing has happened.

A person swells up and bursts.

He explodes like a balloon being popped, armor and all.

The inside of the hemispherical, invisible barrier that was surrounding Ilumgand is painted red and black.

Ugh.

“Microwave”.

I definitely didn't think that's what he meant.

What have I done?

To imagine that there is such a way for a person to die.

The red hemisphere quickly disappears and all that's left is a large red stain on the ground.

It's hard to believe someone just died there.

There's no corpse or even a single shred of flesh left.

「Misumi-kun, you...!」(Hibiki)

「How dare you do this to Ilum-san!」(Chiya)

Senpai and the young priestess saw this sight as soon as they arrived here, and now they're glaring at me.

With eyes full of anger and hatred.

I can't blame them, since they just saw one of their companions die right before their eyes.

But was Ilumgand an ally of Senpai's known as the black knight?

Not only that, but I think the hatred towards me in the eyes of those two is clearly not something that was only just born from this event.

There's no signs of surprise or confusion; they started glaring at me with loathing and fury straight away, which means that from the very beginning...

Wait, it can't be!

My face is pointed downwards slightly, and my mouth twists visibly into a smile.

I'm shocked.

You're kidding, right?

Why am I doing such a thing?!

What are Tomoe, Mio and Shiki doing?!

There is no particular emotion in my eyes.

Only the very ends of my mouth are pointed upwards in a smile.

As I raise my face, my left hand is pointed towards Senpai and the priestess.

Oi, stop it.

Please stop?

「It seems you were too late. I will end you quickly, and then the goddess is next. I think it will not even be painful.」(Makoto) STOP!

「I have completely misjudged you. It's too late for me to realize this now, when there is no going back, so I'm really left with no other choice.」
(Hibiki) 「Well, that's life. Ah, Senpai.」(Makoto)

I'm showing no signs of bloodlust at all.

But I understand what the actions of my future self mean.

Don't fuck with me!

Why would I do this to Senpai?!

「The way a microwave oven works is -」(Makoto) 「STOOOP!」(Makoto)

Haah, haah.

It takes me a while to realize that this ragged breathing is my own.

As I touch my forehead, a large amount of sweat flows from it.

I can feel the wet sensation. I can feel that it's cold sweat.

I stop my shallow breaths for now and take a large, deep one.

I exhale slowly.

「A dream, huh.」(Makoto)

This is Asora, my bedroom.

This isn't a battlefield and Senpai isn't here.

It was a dream.

「... It was a dream, right?」(Makoto)

For such a crazy dream it was so strangely vivid that I question myself unconsciously.

Illumgand is supposed to be dead.

And nobody resembling a black knight has appeared around the hero of Limia or the Hoperaise family.

If we're talking about a knight who protects Senpai, I think there was another one in her party.

One of the kingdom's knights.

I'm not even in the mood to go back to sleep.

I'm completely awake.

Tch, even though dinner with the takoyaki and tako-shabu was a great hit and everyone enjoyed it.

Even Shiki pressed his hands together* in admiration, wondering aloud just how deep the nabe's mysteries are.

TLN*: Like putting your hands together for a prayer/paying respects I laughed at that. Even though I was quite drunk, that was actually pretty funny.

「Haha.」(Makoto)

I let out a small laugh as I remember this enjoyable memory.

It was just a dream, after all.

There's no use worrying about it.

... Oh yeah.

「It's a bit early, but I guess I'll do some bow practice. I want to calm down a bit anyway.」(Makoto) I change my clothes.

I get my bow ready and leave the room.

I head to the archery range that I had built on the grounds.

Until the morning sun rises.

I fire my bow, free from obstructive thoughts.

Chapter 177: Onto the Empire

There's a clear weight felt on my hand.

I am in the Adventurer Guild of Rotsgard.

"This is heavy." (Makoto)

"Your only thoughts are its weight?"

"Even if you say 'only'... the other would be that it is smaller than I originally thought." (Makoto) "The number of humans that have seen this can be counted with the fingers of one's hands you know. A rare egg of a superior dragon. A scholar specialized in dragons would kill its own parents to obtain this you know."

I look at the egg that's the size of a rugby ball.

"Ah, now that you mention it..." (Makoto)

"Are you feeling how mystical it is?"

"I thought that Mio might want to give it a taste, so I have to be careful." (Makoto) "..."

The one that is sitting opposite of me with a table in between, is the head of the whole Adventurer Guild.

A handsome boy with androgynous appearance and a mysterious atmosphere; name's Falz. Though that's his fake identity he uses in society.

His real identity is that of the dragon standing on top of all superior dragons; the Illusory Dragon, Root.

A person that created the Adventurer Guild because of his preferences, and a pervert in the truest sense of the word who goes for both sexes. I don't know if it's for hundreds of years or thousands of years, but he is good at feigning innocence.

In other words, a person I don't want to get too close to.

Well, right now he doesn't have his usual poker face he can control at

will. In front of me, he is showing a shocked face, or maybe it is a troubled face, with a smile on it.

“Well, more importantly, I just have to deliver this to Grount-san who is at the territory of the Empire in the Vanilla Desert, right?” (Makoto)
“Yeah. If possible I want you to experience the dragon society as well. Beginning from that boy there, Lancer. I do feel sorry for having you do this. Of course, I promise you that I will be giving you a proper reward, including the matter of Kaleneon.” (Root) The expression of Root changes into the usual handsome smile.

The Dragon Slayer adventurer named Sofia Bruga is related to the violence caused towards the superior dragons.

This bisexual dragon easily told me that Sofia possessed the same blood as him, but he didn't delve deeper into the matter.

He said he would tell me when the time comes, but who knows if that's true.

The things he told me regarding the request are also not that many.

Currently, the number of superior dragons in good health are only 3; the others have turned into dragon eggs.

The eggs will be entrusted to their dragon brethrens located in various places, and others will be entrusted to believers. They will be told to wait for their eventual return.

And so, I have been given the location of those people and their information, and I have also been asked the delivery of those eggs.

The reward Root has pointed out is not something with form. It is the supply of information that only he knows of, the country that exists inside the territory of the demon race, and things like providing assistance to Kaleneon.

Even if it is an important item, the reward for the delivery of it is quite extraordinary.

“I am looking forward to it. In any case, I was planning on going to

Gritonia, so I can do it while I'm at it." (Makoto) "Fufufu, Princess Lily huh. The invitation was not only from her, but also the intentions of the hero as well. She is not someone that would open her heart to Makoto-kun, but she won't suddenly take you and eat you. Go ahead and tour the Empire while being somewhat cautious.

...Hah... I wanted to go as well" (Root)

"Tour the Empire huh. After that, I am going to Limia Kingdom as well so I don't feel like touring though. Well, I will go have fun." (Makoto) After senpai asked me to contact Prince Joshua, I of course tried to immediately contact him-I mean, her... Ah geez! This is also troublesome!

I will just leave it as Joshua-san.

At the beginning, while I was talking with Joshua-san, it ended up that I will be going to the Kingdom in a near future.

On the other hand, Princess Lily enquired about this and that, and it turned into a mood where I had to go to the Empire.

It is not like I was being played with or coerced into doing anything, but... it kinda didn't feel right.

"Limia Kingdom. Ah, in this side there's Prince Joshua and the hero Hibiki huh. Well well, you have totally become a popular one." (Root) "And you say it with so much fun. Geez." (Makoto)

"I am actually having fun, so it can't be helped. If you need my help, don't hesitate to tell me anytime. Just the simple action of relying on me would make me happy after all." (Root) "When I feel like I need your help, I will be counting on you at that time." (Makoto) "... I will be waiting. Also, leaving aside the Kingdom and Empire, if you plan on going 'further north'..." (Root) Further north.

He is referring to the Demon race huh.

"... What?" (Makoto)

"I have an egg for it, so come to the guild, ok?" (Root)

"I see. Got it." (Makoto)

Now that he mentions it, there's also a delivery point for the demon race territory.

So I will be carrying the eggs of superior dragons while going around greeting the several forces that are in war huh.

From up close, it would look like really suspicious behavior.

I will at least try to be docile in my actions.

... As far as I am able to.

"Your entourage will be Tomoe and Shiki, right? The Empire's hero, Tomoki, is infatuated with Tomoe. Be careful." (Root) "Thanks for the warning." (Makoto)

"If the one going wasn't you, I would also be cautioning about Tomoki's Valkyries, but it seems there's no worries on that part." (Root) Valkyries?

This is the first time I hear of this name.

Aside from the fact that the Empire is researching on guns, I have not gathered much information on them.

Just as Root said, it might be necessary to use this chance to look around.

"Valkyries? What is this about worries?" (Makoto)

"The girls that are entranced with Tomoki-is how you should think of it. What you should be worried about is... well, you don't even yield to me, so I am just saying that there's no worries that you will be falling for any half-assed seduction." (Root) "... Yielding to you, you say." (Makoto)

You are both sexes you know?

The only ones who would accept this when in the know would be people of real valour.

"Even the secretary waiting outside has completely fallen—" (Root) "I have certainly received the eggs. Well then, see ya, pervert Root." (Makoto) "... I feel like you called me in a really rude way, but oh well. See ya later, Makoto-kun." (Root) The morning I depart to the Empire.

It was supposed to be a serious scene where I accept the request of a superior dragon, and yet, I was strangely tired.

Gritonia huh.

It is the first time I visit that country, but I wonder what kind of place it is.

I am actually not that good at dealing with Princess Lily.

It would be nice if it's at least a comfortable place.



“T-This is impressive snow. The latitude shouldn't be that much different from the Kingdom, so what's with this difference?” (Makoto) I heard that Limia Kingdom is a country with abundant green.

I did hear from rumors and manuscripts that Gritonia Empire is a land of intense cold, but when seeing it in person, it is at a shocking level.

They should be practically lined up left and right according to the map after all.

“Gritonia is a land with many mountains after all. Depending on the place, it is said that the snow can reach several meters.” (Shiki)

“Experiencing the climate of another country is also one of the enjoyments of travelling.” (Tomoe) Even when walking on the Golden Highway, it still looks so different.

At the Golden Highway I saw from Tsige, I only felt as if it was a path that simply stretched far into the distance.

While I was in admiration, Tomoe and Shiki gave their impressions and information about it.

“I wonder how it is further north, at the country of the demon race where there's also a lot of mountains. I can't imagine it.” (Makoto) “I would call the place where the demon race lives as an ice field. Of course, it has a lot more snow than here, and the level of wind and cold is remarkably different.” (Tomoe) “For humans, no, for living beings, it is a harsh environment.” (Shiki) The two of them know that place huh.

For living beings...

I feel like I want to visit it, and I also feel like I just want to snuggle in my bedroom.

A while after entering the Empire's territory, the snow immediately increased in thickness, and I learned that the tools to protect us against the cold that we got on Rotsgard were not exaggerated.

While gazing at the features of the snow country, I first head towards a town named Robin.

There was the talk that I would be allowed to use the teleporting formation that leads to the capital, and I was advised to take the teleportation from that town.

It would be quite painful to walk infinitely in this place, so it would be a great help.

"If we weren't walking the Golden Highway, I am confident of ending stranded here." (Makoto) "... I wonder why. Even when I hear the word stranded from Waka, I don't feel a single shred of crisis from it." (Tomoe) "I am sorry but, I feel the same way." (Shiki)

My followers are cruel.

I can hold on without eating for several days, and even when I say cold, aside from the snow, the temperature itself doesn't feel that cold. If I don't know the directions, I can just return to Asora.

...

Eh? The crisis in the word stranded is slowly fading away.

"To-Tomoe! Now that I think about it, I heard you are acquainted with the hero? Didn't you say you didn't like him that much? In that case, it would have been fine to leave it to Shiki alone, or substituting you for Lime was also fine." (Makoto) "At first, I intended to do that, but I had Lime head to Lorel. Hibiki's memories were not on the level of Waka, but it was incredibly interesting, so just in case, that 'thing' in the Empire might also know some interesting things. That time when I discarded him

was a slightly thoughtless play of my part.” (Tomoe) “Hmph, well, Tomoki-kun is also a Japanese person, so I think he knows things I don’t know of. If you don’t want to do it, I will ask Shiki, so tell me without hesitation.” (Makoto) ...Eh?

“... Uhm, Waka. It is something trivial, but at that time, wouldn’t it have been better for me to tell Tomoe that she can ask me without hesitation?” (Shiki) Ah!!

“Wait a bit, Tomoe.” (Makoto)

“What is it?” (Tomoe)

“What was that about Lime being in Lorel?!” (Makoto)

What is she saying all nonchalantly?!

I am glad I didn’t let it slip by!

Hm, I feel like Shiki also said something too...

Tte, for now I will leave that for later.

“Well, Hibiki seems to be interested in us. I have already given her a formal warning, but just in case, I had Lime survey her. It is only that. No need to fret.” (Tomoe) ‘No need to fret’, yeah right!

What’s that about a warning?!

“A formal warning you say. Just what did you tell her?” (Makoto) “That curiosity killed the cat. That she is free to peek at whatever she wants, but the consequences of it are her own responsibility-ja to. Well, instead of a normal warning, it is more like cautioning. Whether it is the Empire, Kingdom, Kaleneon, or the demon race, it would be a pain to have her sniffing around when we are moving around busily doing all this.” (Tomoe) ... Next time I see her, I will tell her sorry for scaring her.

It seems Tomoe is kind of cautious of senpai huh.

I think she was taking the company-no -me into consideration when she did this.

In that case, maybe I am the one that is way too defenseless when with

senpai?

But... she is Japanese and a senpai from the same school. Of course, she wasn't a bad person.

Do I have to be cautious of someone like that too?

It is true that I felt an uncomfortable feeling from senpai. I can't say for sure what it was, but she might not be exactly the same senpai I know of.

It is necessary to doubt her. I kind of don't like that.

An uncomfortable feeling.

When I learn the identity... the reason for it... I will leave the thinking when that time comes.

Yeah.

I have just created a connection with one of the heroes. It is not something I have to urgently inquire about anyways.

Chapter 178: Tomoki Appears

I have been betrayed by the Empire.

A snow country metropolis in a fantasy world.

I was actually really looking forward to the imperial capital's appearance. Wondering what kind of illusory-like land it might be.

Like for example; a steampunk-looking place with steam coming out here and there.

Seriously, there's nothing like that here.

It may be splendid, but well, it gives the impression of a fortress.

If it is like this, the first town I arrived to called Robin gave more of a snowy country than this.

A teleportation facility that can overlook the imperial capital of Ruinas.

There's still one more teleport formation to arrive inside Ruinas, but the guides that followed us from Robin told us to please look at the imperial capital and gave us time here.

From what seems to be a mountainous area of tall mountains, what can be seen from below is a big city.

Even though its circumference is bright white with snow, the inside of the city looks normal like the one of Rotsgard.

There's no snow piled up.

In those points, I think magic is involved.

It is heavily different from what I was expecting...

The imperial capital has a circular shape with three outer walls that demarcate the central and outside circumference.

At the very center there's a castle I can see even from here, so that must be where the emperor is.

It seems like they place social classes to the people living in the imperial capital, so those outer walls are probably the representation of the

difference between the people that live there.

A society reigned by social position huh.

An obvious difference is seen in the standings between humans and demons, so it isn't strange to see differences within humans.

It might be a good chance to feel it with my own skin at least once.

"What do you think of the imperial capital, Waka?" (Shiki) "I had an image that it would be more like... filled with snow or icy." (Makoto) "Me too. How to say it, it is a city with no elegance." (Tomoe) "That's different from expectation huh. This time it will be a stay of about 2 days. There's not much time to look around, so I am happy that they are showing us its entirety in this way. To investigate the atmosphere of the city, maybe I should leave that job to Shiki?" (Makoto) "Understood. I will look around the state of the city when there's free time." (Shiki) "I'm counting on you. I have to deliver this after all." (Makoto) I look at the bag I am carrying.

It seems to be the egg of Lancer. I have to bring this egg to a superior dragon named Grount.

The one guiding us has already been settled by Root to Princess Lily.

Root, he really does have mysterious connections.

He is a pervert without doubts, but his heartfelt consideration, I honestly appreciate it.

"Oh right, it would be bad to leave the guide waiting too much. Well then, let's go." (Makoto) "Yes."

"Right."

I call Tomoe and Shiki, and confirm that both of them nod.

I wave my hand at the guide that is looking at us from afar and return.

Later, we will be doing a teleportation once more, and then, after receiving several inspections, we will head to the place of the princess. There, we will meet the hero and the princess.

The Empire's hero, Iwahashi Tomoki.

It seems he is 2 years younger than me, but as a hero, he has been playing quite the big role.

I wonder if the crater that can be seen slightly further away from the imperial capital was his doing.

If I am able to ask him about it, let's try asking.

I am half looking forward to it and half uneasy.

While thinking hopefully about the second hero I will be meeting, I step onto the teleport formation.



“Well then Raidou-sama, please wait in this room here. The two there, I ask you to follow us.”

“...Understood. Tomoe, Shiki, see you later.” (Makoto)

The two are guided into the castle and disappear into its depths.

Being the only one left now, I open the door and wait. I follow the instructions of the guide that was here moments ago and enter the room at the left side.

It seems to be the norm to have the representative and the other party wait in different places when doing their greetings, and it is not like this is just a custom done only in negotiations.

Even if they isolate me in a business relationship, I have already decided that there will be no other conclusion than demanding to leave, so there's not much point in doing so though.

If not, there would be no point in having Tomoe and Shiki accompanying me.

But I thought that the one isolated would be Tomoe. This is a bit unexpected.

I look at my given room as I wait.

As expected of the castle of a large country and the place where the emperor is in.

Leaving aside mine, this reception room is a lot more extravagant than the one from Zara-san and Rembrandt-san.

It isn't like it is all shiny. There's a calm and settled atmosphere that makes me feel its elegance and extravagance. What I am trying to say is that, I can't calm down.

Drinking the given tea while sinking deeply into the sofa, the part at my lower back feels fluffy.

Hm, the presence of people..

2 of them. Slightly behind, there's 3 more.

5?

That's quite a lot.

Even when there's already 2 standing guard outside the door and a maid-san inside the room that is serving me tea.

Well, it would be better to wait for them standing.

Because I moved, the maid-san lifted her head, and while that happened, the door opens and the 5 enter the room. Seeing them, she does one step back and returns to her original position.

"Glad that you have come, Raidou-dono. You were a great help at Rotsgard. Let me please give you my thanks once again."

Princess Lily was the first one to speak.

From the people here, she is the only familiar face.

"Thank you for inviting me in this occasion, Princess Lily. It's embarrassing to say but, I have personally seen with my own eyes such a big city within this thick snow; witnessing the power of the empire, I thought that maybe we are out-of-place. That I am now able to meet with someone who I knew when in Rotsgard, I am slightly relieved." (Makoto)
"I am happy that you praise our imperial capital. It is sad that it will be a short stay, and here I thought about escorting you and make sure you would have fun. However, when I saw your face, a desire of having you make a store at our country in your return has been borned. Please do

consider it.” (Lily) Eh?

Her atmosphere is softer in its entirety compared to the time I met her in Rotsgard.

Is it because it is her own country?

But I was told that there would be no negotiation, yet, it already feels as if the odds and ends of the words have already deviated from mere casual talk.

More so because her mouth looks gentle, but the depths of her eyes were not smiling.

As I thought, I am no good with her.

And, the one at her side is probably the hero. He is standing right beside the princess, so there's no mistake, right?

He is supposed to be Japanese, but maybe it is called odd-eye, the color of his eyes are different and the color of his hair is a natural silver.

Did he tamper with his appearance?

Or was he originally a half or a quarter?

I heard that he was two years younger from senpai, but his height is definitely over 180cm. A handsome man that wouldn't look out of place in this world of humans.

I see. This type of people is what that Goddess prefers huh.

“Right. I can't just be happy about our reunion. Raidou-dono, I will introduce you. The person here is the one providing support to our country, hero Tomoki-sama.” (Lily) As I thought.

“You are the hero-sama huh. Nice to meet you, I am the representative of the Kusunoha Company, name is Raidou. I am honored to meet you.” (Makoto) “Iwahashi Tomoki.” (Tomoki)

While doing his greeting, he looks at me seriously.

“What is it?” (Makoto)

“Don't ‘what is it?’ me. You are a Japanese, right? Your face is not that of

a hyuman, and it doesn't seem like you are a demi-human either. Also, you are using an obvious fake name like Raidou." (Tomoki) ...

I was exposed in an instant.

Hah...

Well, it is true that I don't have a nice face. And the name Raidou is also one that can be easily pointed out by people that know of it.

Hm... but is it something that can be instantly pointed out?

Is he quite the gamer?

Senpai didn't react much to the name Raidou after all.

"Ahahaha. Well, a lot happened and I am doing business here."

(Makoto) "Your real name is?" (Tomoko)

"To-Tomoki-sama? What is all this about?" (Lily)

After Princess Lily glanced at me, she turns towards Tomoki and asks.

Understanding that Tomoki and I have some sort of connection seems to have shaken her quite a bit.

"This guy, he calls himself Raidou, but he is the same as me, an otherworlder. With his face features, it is practically certain that he is Japanese. In other words, a human from the same country as me."

(Tomoki) "The same as Tomoki-sama... A hero?!" (Lily)

"I don't know if he is. I have not heard about a third hero from the Goddess. Also, he is faking his own name and doing business. Hey, you. Please tell me your name." (Tomoki) "Misumi Makoto. I came here when I was in second year of senior high school. That would be two years higher than you, right?" (Makoto) "Why do you know my age?" (Tomoki)

"I heard it from Hibiki-senpai. Before coming here, senpai was in Rotsgard you see." (Makoto) What's with him?

I am telling him that I am older than him, and yet, how long does he intend to speak with me in that manner?

Maybe he is the type that doesn't care about seniority?

“Senpai... then, you were a student from the same Nakatsuhara School as Hibiki?” (Tomoki) Hibiki?!

He is even calling senpai without honorifics?!

Incredible. There's an existence here that I can't understand at all.

I want to say a few words about that usage of words of his, but the princess is here as well, and there's also the three behind that are probably acquaintances of the hero or his companions.

I feel like it might be a bit bad to say this here.

“Yeah, that would be the case.” (Makoto)

“... Hmph. That's not really interesting.” (Tomoki)

Hah?!

Leaving aside what he was implying, is that something you should be saying aloud?!

What do you mean by not interesting?!

“Uhm, Tomoki-sama. This occasion is only for greetings, so after introducing the others, we can leave other matters for later.” (Lily) Maybe the princess felt like my conversation with Tomoki-kun would take long, so she cut into the talk.

But well, this Tomoki-kun was the type of junior that would go thinking that he can just go talking to anyone equivalently?

Hmph.

Perhaps I am the old fashioned one for being concerned about ages here.

For me, it was natural to use formal speech when it is towards someone even if it was only a one year difference though.

It was that way in the archery club.

“No, Lily. If he is Japanese, please let me speak with him for a little longer. I think that this way will be faster.” (Tomoki) “...But that is... this person is a guest that I invited, and there's also the point that he was called here for another matter.” (Lily) “Sorry, please leave that for later.

Two of his subordinates have come with him, so it should be fine to leave them a verbal message.” (Tomoki) Hey hey!

That’s not something for you to decide.

What’s with this boy that’s acting all high-and-mighty?

What Princess Lily is talking about regarding that other matter is the guiding to the place of Grount and the permission to use the teleport formation, so it is something that is directly related to me though?!

Ah, geez.

Since this is happening, should I take this opportunity to give him a sermon?

“... Raidou-dono.” (Lily)

“Yes?” (Makoto)

The princess called me Raidou.

She didn’t call me Makoto or Misumi.

“It is about the matter that Falz-dono has entrusted you with. Is it one of those two that are actually going? I am thinking about going myself to tell them the particulars though.” (Lily) ...Eh...

Is this supposed to be the point where the princess yields?

The maids at the surroundings and the three at the back seem to be affected by the charm power of Tomoki-kun. The atmosphere around them is pinkish and doesn’t feel like there will be any point in trying to speak with them. The only one I could rely on was the princess who seems like she is not under his control, and yet...

Anyways, the charm power gives a more displeasing feeling than I expected.

It feels like being inside an elevator with a bunch of people that have thick perfume.

“Ah... about that, I was planning on going myself, so I will be the one doing the speaking.” (Makoto) “... Raidou-dono will? I am sorry but, the

domain of Grount is not a place where ordinary methods... ah, right. Since you are from another world like Tomoki-sama, it might not be that impossible. Understood. We will be leaving our seats for a while then.”

(Lily) “Lily, if you are going to be leaving, do so yourself please. I want the other girls to be here.” (Tomoki) “Well then, I will be leaving for a bit. I also have something to speak with your companions, so I will be heading there.” (Lily) “Got it.” (Tomoki)

“Ah, okay?.” (Makoto)

Uwaaa, the princess really left.

Tomoki-kun, how much authority do you have by being the hero of the Empire?

Is a hero such an absolute existence?

“Now then.” (Tomoki)

Tomoki-kun tosses himself grandly onto the sofa opposite of me and sat in a relaxed posture.

Just as he said, the three girls that are wearing the same dress design as the maids were still inside the room.

The three at the back of Tomoki-kun had a specially dazed expression.

Everyone is sexy, but just like what I said before, because of the charm power, it felt like something was stuck in my nose and it was nauseating.

“I didn’t think I would encounter a Japanese male. Ah, take a sit.” (Tomoki) “.....” (Makoto)

Being urged on, I sit.

How to say this; is he like this with anyone?

“Now then, let’s open our chests and speak to our heart’s content. For the time being, there’s something I definitely have to firmly request from you guys in this occasion. Is it okay to say this first?” (Tomoki) “Fine but, I am two years older than you, Tomoki-kun. Don’t you use formal speech with your senpais?” (Makoto) “Hah? Why would I do that for a stranger just because he was born earlier? I am the type of person that feels like

changing one's behavior depending on the person are the ones who are rude." (Tomoki) Being born earlier, and the fact that I am a stranger.... For me, this is plenty reason to be using formal speech though.

Hibiki-senpai, if you knew he was this kind of person, please tell me beforehand.

If you had done that, I would have been able to come here with my expectations low.

...Probably.

"..... I see." (Makoto)

"In the first place, if you are talking about being formal, you who are a mere merchant should be the one being formal since I am the hero. You who changed your behavior because we are the same Japanese and have an age difference, shouldn't be speaking about others, right? Our social standpoints hold precedence over seniority after all." (Tomoki) "..."

..... Is this guy serious?

I see. I can kind of understand why Tomoe hates him.

Leaving aside every single word he says, I can tell that he is trying to interpret everything in a way that fits him better.

Not only double standards, he feels like the type that would easily place triple to quadruple standards.

"Well, I won't pursue that topic anymore. Let's talk at ease. And then, ah right, about the request I had of you guys." (Tomoki) Eh? It was made as if I was the one in the wrong.

What's with this flow?

There's 4 people aside from me, and yet, it is strange that not a single one is saying anything.

"... Let's hear it." (Makoto)

I somehow collect myself and say only that.

"Give me Tomoe." (Tomoki)

Ah?

What is this idiot saying?

For only these few words, there was a need of a rather lengthy silence.

Because my head had gone completely blank.

I was seriously about to forget about everything that happened before it.

So it is really possible to blow away one's thoughts.

“Hah?” (Makoto)

By the time I asked again, quite a lot of time had passed.

Chapter 179: Negotiation Breakdown

“Of course, it won’t be for free.” (Tomoki)

“...”

Give him Tomoe?

This guy certainly did say that.

It seems he is using his charm power and living a smooth life, but he is like a kid asking for a toy.

He really wants Tomoe who he was unable to obtain with his demonic eyes, and is now telling me to give her to him.

Is that what this is all about?

“The girls here are the daughters of nobles from the Empire. But they had some talent in battle, so I trained them.” (Tomoki) “...”

I did lose my speech after that stupid utterance, but right now I am probably composed.

With the signal of that guy, Tomoki, the three girls that were at his back moved to both of my sides and my back.

“The level of those three are over 400. Their face and style, well, it is as you see. They are quite popular, you know? Well, compared to Japan, anyone in this world is good looking though. Hahaha!” (Tomoki) “...”

The two at my sides are around my age.

A beautiful type and the other is a cute type. The last one that is at my back slightly bend and placing her hand towards my chin, seems to be older.

Did Princess Lily tell him my preferences, or is it just that this is simply his own hobby? I really don’t know.

The cute one is taking my hand and carrying it towards her breasts.

What a straight seduction.

Well, something like this... doesn’t matter at all.

“Lily has told me about Tomoe’s level. Even if we add numbers here, it wouldn’t be enough. If you want to, I can bring more. Later, I will guide you to where my harem is, so you can choose a number of them and take them with you.” (Tomoki) “...”

Just how much of a joke is this guy.

No matter the details, they are supposed to be girls that yearn for him.

And also, Tomoe is practically family. An important existence.

I don’t have a single shred of intention to give her to someone who is trying to get her as if trading objects.

“Staying silent? Ah, you must be nervous. I can understand. You, don’t have experience right? Don’t worry. These girls will properly instruct you. At first, it is okay to just leave it in their hands. If I order it, they will go to whoever’s place, and they will obey anyone. I said this before, but these girls can fight at a level higher than standards. I promise you that I will properly tell them to devote themselves to you when I give them over.” (Tomoki) “...”

Control them with charm, finish their training, and use them for battle.

When Root mentioned the Valkyries, he was referring to these girls huh. Or maybe, everyone in Tomoki’s harem are referred as Valkyries?

Whichever it is, his attitude feels like he is quite familiar with this type of situations.

Being Japanese, using people as object, and a high schooler before coming to this world; a person like that, how dare he act this naturally.

Are you telling me that he has already completely forgotten about Japan?

Is it really weird for me to cling onto it all this time?

“Hey, say something. What you wish! How many women do you want? Gold, land, rights for business; those things are fine too. What are you being all silent for?” (Tomoki) I breathe in deeply.

Now then.

“...I refuse” (Makoto)

“Ah?” (Tomoki)

He asks me again.

In no way did I say this in a low voice.

He heard me, yet he still asked.

He is trying to coerce me.

Compared to Zara-san, this is a flimsy attempt.

“I said I refuse. For me and also for the company, Tomoe is not someone that can be replaced. Give it up.” (Makoto) “... Are you seriously saying this?” (Tomoki)

“Give up. I won’t give you Tomoe. That is my wish.” (Makoto) I clearly tell him this.

He was blatantly trying to coerce me and trying to shut me up with his presence.

“... You, you haven’t received any significant power from the Goddess, right? You are not that strong either. Tomoe and that other guy are quite strong, but they are not here right now. Lily has gone to deal with them after all.” (Tomoki) “And?” (Makoto)

“I have a relative understanding of your abilities. You can’t beat me. Can’t you nod until being beaten by force? Are you stupid? This place is also perfectly soundproof, you know.” (Tomoki) “...If you don’t even intend to call me properly, there wasn’t much point in giving you my name. How can you properly gauge my power when this our first time meeting? Are heroes specialized in bluffs? Are you the type that is all bark and no bite?” (Makoto) Can’t get a hint huh.

Even senpai was unable to notice much of my power, so I don’t think this thing can notice it.

Even if he is really the one that created that crater, that level of threat is no danger at all.

I already know that Tomoki is using some sort of tool to gauge my power.

In a sense, he is acting big out of a basis.

“You... it seems like you don’t properly understand the situation you are in right now.” (Tomoki) Instantly after those words of Tomoki, blades were placed at my neck, heart, and wrists.

No need to say, this is the work of those girls.

Just that, they are not directly hitting me.

Even if it’s thin, these girls don’t have enough power to cut through my magic power armor after all. That’s why, it is natural that I don’t need to be on guard.

But a smile appears in Tomoki’s face.

“With this, are you still able to keep using that contempting mouth of yours, Raidou-dono?” (Tomoki) “...”

A man that completely gets on my nerves.

He is more annoying than most humans.

“I can somewhat tell the power of others. The method is business secret though. You don’t have the power to defeat a single one of those girls. And, the reason why you are able to have Tomoe obey you despite that...” (Tomoki) “...”

“Must be because you have a strong taming power. You must be able to control strong mamonos and dragons with that power of yours.” (Tomoki) ... Totally wrong.

I don’t know how he reached that conclusion, but there’s a lot of questionable points.

Most of all, I am grateful that he has brought out blades to coerce me.

He is the one that began.

That will clear my conscience slightly.

I will just have Tomoe search for Grount’s location and quickly finish

my task.

I don't want to stay long in this country.

No, if possible, I don't want to come here anymore.

"Well well, I didn't expect to be seen through. It seems heroes are existences I can't underestimate." (Makoto) While saying things I don't really mean, I strengthen the soundproof barrier that was already present.

Harden the walls, and place a lock on the door as well.

Done.

"That's why, if you turn over Tomoe to me, she will have to obey me. Right?" (Tomoki) "I see, I see." (Makoto)

Ignoring the three girls that have blades on my body, I place strength in my legs.

"Hey, you—?!" (Tomoki)

A high-pitched sound and a short scream of a girl, cut off the words of Tomoki.

One of the blades falls onto the table in between me and Tomoki and makes a sound. The women that were trying to restrain me lift their voices at me who is standing without caring about it.

I look down on Tomoki who is still sitting.

"To try obtaining Tomoe when you have only piled up this level of women, it seems that you have really looked down on my follower." (Makoto) "This is the center of the Empire. Do you understand just how disadvantageous it would be for you to get in trouble with me?" (Tomoki) Without caring about my gaze, Tomoki actually rested his back and looks back at me.

And then...

"Yeah, I understand." (Makoto)

"What?" (Tomoki)

"I will have to do my best to hush it up." (Makoto)

“Fuh, stop the bluffing. A single merchant like you can get the patronage of a large country like Gritonia, moreover, the number of talents you own will increase, you know? Think about this properly, merchant. You might be the owner of a slightly big company, but don’t go getting heated up over a negotiation.” (Tomoki) “Sorry to say but, even if I am called the representative, I am more of a decoration. To the point that the title is too much for me. If you were looking for such composure from me, your calculations were wrong. My place is a bit special you see. If I don’t punch you right now, I will probably make Tomoe angry later. Well, even without that, I would still do it though.” (Makoto) It seems Tomoki has noticed my change in presence.

“Girls, that guy—!!” (Tomoki)

He tries to gives orders to the three girls that had taken a bit of distance from me...

But it’s too late.

“Sleep.” (Makoto)

Sealing the movements of the girls around by stretching the hands of the magic power armor, I used a direct sleeping spell.

As if acting in concert to my words, their bodies fall onto the rug.

While at it, I also made the maid sleep as well.

“!! ga”

Kicking the table, I create a path.

Advancing just as is, I grab his temples.

The resistance of the sitted Tomoki was weak, to the point that it makes me doubt the power of a hero.

Is he the type that gets stronger depending on prerequisites?

Even so, I won’t change what I will be doing.

It is his fault for being unable to show his true strength unless those moments occur.

I smash his face onto the floor.

I lift my leg to the back, and just like that, I kick his head.

The hero flies with quite the momentum and hits the walls. But, there wasn't much change in the situation outside.

It seems like the effect of the soundproof and the hardening is showing good results.

I unhurriedly close the distance.

“Hn”

I stop my feet.

Something comes flying from Tomoki.

It's not a spell. A tool, weapon.

A kind of throwing knife; three of them.

It doesn't seem like normal knives, but I don't mind them.

I once again walk, and receive the thrown blades with the magic power armor. The moment the knives make contact, they shine brightly, and explode.

And what of it.

Without minding about it, I close the distance, and this time, the glaring Tomoki shoots a spell at me.

When I thought something shone, it hit the magic power armor.

It is fast, but powerless.

If you want to make me flinch, you will have to show firepower on the level of Sofia.

Receiving all the attacks that don't even need to be evaded, I lift Tomoki's body with the magic power armor.

His hate-filled eyes had not changed even now.

Hmph.

You treated Tomoe as an object.

You must be properly prepared for the result of your actions, right?

At Tomoki who had his face and body equally pressed onto the wall, I mindlessly punched him to a point that I had stopped counting the number of times in the middle of it.

I ignored anything he said. No matter what he did, I blocked it. Because I thought that this way would be more effective.

When I aimed for his face every time he opened his mouth, in time, he shut it.

I thought that I would be refreshed while punching him, but it didn't happen.

Aside from the first punch, the ones that followed didn't serve as a refresher.

I have to make it so he doesn't think about putting his hands on Tomoe ever again. With that reason alone, I continued inflicting pain.

In time, I let off Tomoki who has lost his ability to speak coherent words.

"It's great that I am weak, right? Because you are let off with only this much." (Makoto) That image of him curling his body and holding his head with both hands... made me imagine something.

"... So this time you are the one staying silent huh, Tomoki. Hey, aren't you a hero? How about being a little bit more dignified even when being beaten? That look of yours, it is comical how you look like a bullied person." (Makoto) It looked like Tomoki reacted to the word bullied, but... there's no point in digging deeper into it.

I grab Tomoki with my own hands.

I shrink down the magic power armor, and in exchange, I use [Sakai] to heal the wounds of Tomoki.

The healing proceeds quite quickly.

Because the concealing ability of the magic power armor was released, the light of magic power leaks out to my surroundings.

If Tomoki were to gauge me when I'm in this state, he might actually not have gone for a forceful method.

He doesn't look like the type that picks a fight with the strong after all.

Whether it is senpai or Tomoki, their power is not that big of a deal.

No, frankly speaking, the war itself is not a threat for Kuzunoha Company or Asora. That's why, whether it is Tomoe or Shiki, they probably won't say much to me about this.

Because no matter what happens, the difference would be like using my left leg instead of my right to kick a small pebble.

It is 'troublesome', so it is a war I don't want to get involved with though.

The external wounds finish erasing. The healing is done huh.

I drag Tomoki, who is taller than me, towards the sofa he was in, and throw him there.

I return [Sakai] to concealment, and return the kicked table to its original place.

I slap the cheeks of the spaced-out Tomoki to return him to his senses.

...

Tomoki looks at me with conscious eyes.

Just that, those eyes weren't filled with strong will or haughtiness, and there was clear weakness and fear mixed in it.

"I properly healed you, so there should be no impediments in your war with the demon race." (Makoto) I look at his eyes and tell him with a smile that he has been healed.

"Well then, I will be leaving now. I have another business here in the Empire you see. I am kind of...busy. Of course, it is not as important as being a hero though." (Makoto) While speaking, I line up the three girls and maid that I forgot about, and have them sit on the sofa I was in.

I pass at his side and head to the door.

“Ah, also...” (Makoto)

I release the lock from the door and the hardening of the walls.

And then, I place my hand on the knob and tell him something important with my back still facing him.

“Don’t wish for Tomoe... no, for anything and anyone of Kuzunoha, ever again. Next time, whether it is intentional or an accident, I will not forgive it. I don’t care about you using your charm power in whichever way you want, but that’s only if it doesn’t involve us. Don’t forget that.” (Makoto)
Right.

If he tries something, I won’t be merciful.

To the princess, and the other countries; it is because I didn’t clearly say this that something as stupid as this has occurred.

As expected, maybe the main problem is that I look like I am easy to deal with. That’s making Kuzunoha Company like a tasty chance.

That’s why every place wants to try and put their hands on it.

I should properly tell the other party that I don’t plan on yielding.

The friction that this will create, I will just consider it as a necessary price.

Yeah.

If in the future there’s a weird haggle demanded from me, I wouldn’t be able to take it.

The presents of Susanoo-sama and the others has not been made clear either, and I also have the errand of Root. There’s also the audience with Limia and the Demon Lord.

Now that I think about it... teaching Tomoki here about this might have been a plus in a sense.

There was a slight good in coming to the Empire.

Leaving onto the hall, I tell the knight-looking people that the talk is

over, and tell them that I want to return to where Tomoe and Shiki are.

I thought that they would bring someone to guide me, but it was the knight-san himself that took the guiding role.

It would be nice if Tomoe and Shiki didn't go on a rampage as well.

...If it's those two, there's no need to worry huh.

Hah...

Looking at my opening and closing hands while facing the sky, I make a sigh that's definitely not from regret.

It's because I have flung crude violence.

Chapter 180: White Desert

The surface of the spread out ground is bright white.

This is...just beautiful.

Incredible.

At my field of vision there's only white and blue. The white of the ground and the blue of the sky.

"Hah..." (Makoto)

I let out a long sigh.

"Raidou-dono, did you like it? Our Empire's unexplored region, the White Sand Sea."

Hearing the voice from my back, I remember that I didn't come here alone.

That's how much I was moved and surprised.

"... It is a splendid scenery. I am truly moved." (Makoto) "A splendid scenery, is it. I see. It may be a merchant-like impression."

"What do you mean by merchant-like?" (Makoto)

"Pardon me. Merchant-like was a slightly incorrect word to use. I just thought that this is not an impression a fighter would give. That's how I felt, that's all. The desert is not a gentle place for the people entering it after all."

From Gritonia Empire's capital Ruinas to here, we only used one teleport formation.

This female knight says it is an unexplored region, but there isn't that much distance from a human settlement.

It is a place that is shut out by a mountain range at the east of Ruinas, and it is practically neighboring it.

The Empire is completely under control of it. Entrance is restricted.

In that sense, it is correct to say that it is an unexplored region.

“A white desert. Well, I have seen something nice. I have to be grateful of that pervert<Root>.” (Makoto) “What’s most important is that you like it. This is a place that not even the Empire related people dare to get close to. The entrance is being strictly managed, and originally, even if you were a guest of Lily-sama, it would still be impossible to have you come here. Please do understand the solicitude Lily-sama and Tomoki-sama have for you.”

It seems she didn’t hear the last part, since I said it in a low voice.

Tomoki huh.

Yesterday, after having the hero Tomoki face a little pain, I reunited with Tomoe and Shiki, and finished my talk with Princess Lily.

It seems the destination of the Root’s errand is at a place called White Desert in the Gritonia Empire. That’s where the superior dragon Grount is supposed to be. It is a dragon that is somewhat connected with the Empire, and it is certainly true that this is an errand done just because I had the chance.

I did hear from Root that he would be getting the permission, but I didn’t think Princess Lily was involved in it as well.

Well, it is not like every request is going to pass through. This place seems to be important for the Empire, and it has ended in me going with a guide that the Empire prepared.

When I heard the talk about a guide, for a second I thought it would be Tomoki and I frowned.

That was a relief.

My guide is a direct subordinate of Princess Lily called Ginebia-san. It seems she is also Princess Lily’s bodyguard.

She is young and still a royal guard, so she must be quite talented. Just that she is a part of Tomoki’s party, and is filled to the brim with the charm power though.

They gave me a guide that is the bodyguard of Princess Lily and a

member of the hero party.

This is something Ginebia-san said, this must be the will of Princess Lily, and also a way to keep me in check. Tomoe and Shiki told me this.

A royal guard and one of the most prominent knights.

But there's a title placed on her. Royal guard Grount.

The strongest knight that has received the blessing of the superior dragon Grount.

According to Tomoe, in terms of protection, it is prominent even in the world. Also, if she is able to obtain location advantage, Tomoe said that she could stop an army of thousands.

It is impressive since she was able to make Tomoe say that much about her.

After that she said: "Well, it would take me around 3 minutes to beat her. Just about right for a warm-up." Which completely ruined the whole image. She is still in her twenties, so being able to climb that high is worth of praise.

What's important is the point that after Ginebia-san obtained the job of royal guard and became the direct knight of the princess, it lead to taking the trial of Grount and receiving the blessing.

She has the power to travel solo in this white sea of sand and meet Grount.

The princess must have judged that this knight would be able to chase after me no matter where I go.

"Superior dragon Grount. His alias of Sand Sea might come from this place." (Makoto) "Raidou-dono, I am sorry for the rudeness but..." (Ginebia) "Ginebia-dono, of course I am deeply grateful for the princess and Tomoki-sama." (Makoto) "It is okay if that's the case. The previous statement was from my own volition, so please do keep it a secret from the two." (Ginebia) "Yes, I understand. By the way... Ginebia-dono, I heard that you passed the trial and met with Grount, but which direction is this

dragon's dwelling?" (Makoto) While facing Ginebia-san, I grab a fistful of sand with my left hand.

The pure white sand smoothly spills from my hand. The feel of it is also impressive.

"... I also got lost for several days with no idea of the direction. It was only a miracle. But this is something that Grount tells the people that wish for their blessing. It's also engraved on the gate, but it is to: 'Go straight without wavering'. Of course, I also followed those words."

(Ginebia) As you go by, there's only sand in sight.

Going straight isn't as easy as it sounds. And I don't want to stay here for several days.

I am planning on returning tomorrow after all.

For now, I will try going straight and see. When I separate from Ginebia-san, I can use [Sakai] to search for the location of the dragon.

"Go straight without wavering huh. Thanks for the info." (Makoto)
"Raidou-dono, let me tell you this. From here onwards, there's no guarantee of your life as this is a dangerous desert. Mamonos will appear as well. It seems you are carrying some sort of luggage, but trying to challenge the desert with only that is akin to suicide. If you want to go, I recommend coming at another time..." (Ginebia) "Ah, I will be returning by today, so Ginebia-dono, please wait at the cabin of the teleport formation. Thanks for guiding me." (Makoto) I shift the bag where the egg is in.

When I checked this morning, I caught Tomoe, Mio, and Shiki messing with it by scribbling on it.

Is it a cast of a hospitalized patient? Is what I thought.

... Well, what's important is the inside, so no matter what's written on it, I think there won't be any problem though.

It is the egg of Lancer, so it can't be helped.

For me, he is already dead, so I am able to clear my conscience by

treating it as a new life. But Tomoe and Mio who were unable to deal with him themselves, were especially eager to do something to him.

In a sense, it is proof that they treasure me, so well, I ended up letting them off.

“Wa?! Raidou-dono!! The White Sand Sea is supervised by Grount, and there’s sand and fire traps in many places! Please return!!” (Ginebia)
Ignoring the words of Ginebia-san, I change the color of my coat after a long time of not doing it.

Acceleration equipment~.

Errand, here I go~.

“Well then, I wonder where he is.” (Makoto)

I kick the ground.

The feeling of accelerating at once is pleasant.

When I look at my back for an instant, there was a cloud of white sand scattered at my back. Because of that, I can’t see Ginebia-san.

“Wah?! Just how much movement speed do you have?!” (Ginebia) I land.

I could hear the voice of Ginebia from afar. At this rate, I can easily lose her.

While carefreely pondering, I change [Sakai] into search and increase its range.

This place is really big.

“Oh.” (Makoto)

My feet were sinking into the sand in an unnatural way. The sand at my surrounding is also pushing me down at an incredible rate. Soon, the sand had become like a mortar, dragging me to the center of a space of sand.

Is this like, a classic?

I thought that maybe it is an ant hell or the pattern where the center is hollowed. When I checked at the center, there were sharp edges resembling those of a beetle waiting for me there.

“An ant hell huh.” (Makoto)

“Raidou-dono!!! That place is the den of a Mamono that drags their prey with sand. I was too late!! I will be going right-- Eh?!!” (Ginebia) “Heave-ho!!” (Makoto)

I grab that beetle-like thing with both hands and just like that, I use brute force to lift it.

Oh, it is truly an ant hell.

Its buttock is pretty grotesque.

Sorry butt, I am looking for a different game so... at a direction where Ginebia-san isn't and a place where I won't be going... I throw it.

Next time I should just jump out of it and escape.

I once again jump and land. Repeating that process of jumping and landing, I use the search [Sakai] and wait until it catches the presence of something that might be the one of Grount.

It didn't take long.

I found what's most likely the place.

“It really was straight head. Is it a dragon that doesn't tell lies?”
(Makoto) A divided desert, storms of sand, a burning sand river(the fire's also white).

I coated myself with the magic armor and while advancing straight into it, I was unable to feel the presence of Ginebia anymore. <Changed magic power armor to magic armor cause it is a mouthful> When I was at a distance to confirm with my eyes the point that [Sakai] had detected, I caught sight of it.

“At the end there's a white cone? Is that wind swirling at high speed? I am impressed that Ginebia-san was able to pass through this.” (Makoto) I am beginning to get hungry, so let's quickly deliver this egg.

I advance until it is right at my nose.

“It is going at quite the speed. I thought it was a reversed tornado

version, but it seems to be something even more fiendish. It is completely white and I can't even see the inside. If someone tries to pass with normal means, he would end up as minced meat." (Makoto) While saying that, I take one step forward.

"Pardon the intrusion." (Makoto)

I put the arms of the magic armor inside.

Forcibly tearing up the conic sand and the spell that composes it, I enter inside.



"What's this?"

I experienced something that I have never felt before.

In my long thousands years of life, this is something I have never experienced before.

This sea of white sand is being called names like 'Sand Wave' and 'Dragon's Trial'.

That's me.

Superior Dragon, Grount.

Earth and fire resides in this body of mine, but for a long while, I haven't used this power to fight with any enemies.

While giving blessings to the strong ones that cross this sand sea, I have been watching over the world's natural course for a long time with the help of the spirits.

The latter is actually the work of Root, but he is our chief, and has also created the Adventurer Guild and living within human society.

This work that should have just been temporarily changed, by the time I noticed, it had become my livelihood.

Ah, right now is not the time to be rambling like this.

There's someone that is traversing this sand sea at a frightening speed.

The one's who passed the gate are: the knight, who I gave a blessing before; and that other person.

But even if he were to receive the advice of the knight in advance, I don't understand how he was able to arrive here in less than an hour.

He easily evaded the Mamonos of the desert, moreover, he didn't kill a single one of them.

He plunged into all the traps that I set up and has broke through them.

His speed didn't drop, so he is probably unscathed.

Until now, the fastest record has been 3 days. If made into hours, it would be around 72 hours.

It is someone that would easily break the notion of records.

But you know... 1 hour is way too crazy.

From the gate till here, it would be around 70 km.

His speed is at 70km per hour while evading all the mamonos and traps, and traversing through the desert with no signs?

I-I feel like my head will explode.

Don't joke around.

To meet someone like that, I would feel bad for all the previous challengers.

Okay, in that case... I used a spell formation with all my power and rolled up a massive amount of sand, heated it up to a high temperature, and had it swirl conically.

It is a barrier that would turn anyone into minces no matter their defense.

I will have you receive at least this much maliciousness.

... Well, it would be unfair as a trial to make it too severe, so I made it possible to cancel.

With this, he will learn a bit about the harshness of the trial.

Whether it is a hyuman or demihuman, they utilize their given powers too readily. <Probably refers to using their powers without thinking of the consequences.> And yet, they think that they are worthy of that power.

I thought that the system Root created about levels in the adventurer guild was also dangerous.

Power should be something that one obtains after passing through a trial that fits it.

Giving my blessing to two persons in the present time, I didn't think this would happen. I need to have him know of this, or my reputation will cry.

"Well, I can't deny that I am looking forward to seeing the face of that person."

That mutter was my last moment of composure.

"?!!!!"

Something pierced through the barrier I created.

"Impossible... An arm? A cluster of magic power. Is he trying break the barrier by brute force with that thing?!"

A whole different level of magic power.

When it touched the barrier, I was able to tell its characteristics.

It is a hyuman.

But outside his body, there's something crazy made of magic power that seemed as if it were made by gathering the magic power of all the people in the world.

The two arms of that cluster of magic power had thrust inside the barrier.

My common sense was crumbling at this very moment.

Surpassing the magic power amount of a dragon in the body of a hyuman. Even in the Lorel priestesses, this is something that rarely happens.

As expected, having it break in this way will hurt my dragon pride.

I place even more power into the barrier.

The shadow of a person that was slowly advancing, stopped its feet.

“Eh?”

The voice of a male.

From where I am, I am able to pick up his voice, but it seems from his side, he still hasn't grasped my presence.

He must have noticed that the density of the barrier increased.

He is able to bring out such a mass of magic power and stabilize it. He should be able to do this much.

But...

“...The pierced place doesn't return to its original state. The power...is increasing further?! This is, just what in the world am I witnessing?”
(Grount) “As expected of the last trap. It will be a bother when going back, so let's tear it off.”

Muttering this nonchalantly, the man that is wearing a red blazing coat controlled the magic power arms that were piercing through and spread the area in one breath.

As the master of the spell, I can tell how the composition of the spell is slowly breaking into pieces.

Sand spinning at high speed and in high temperature. It didn't serve as an obstacle at all.

This is...different.

This isn't the strength of a person taking the trial.

There's no such challenger.

Could it be, the invasion of a person that is coming here to subjugate me after all this time?

Since the time Gritonia Empire was made, that hasn't happened once though.

Was the blessed Ginebia threatened into guiding him?

There's the possibility.

Even if it's her, she wouldn't be able to stop a person like that.

No.

I don't think anyone in the Empire can stop him.

“...”

I look at the dispersed barrier with strained eyes.

I waited inside my den which I made wide and sleep in.

Now that it has come to this, I have no choice but to meet him myself.

That is also a part of a superior dragon's pride.

He soon appeared.

His equipment was so light to the point that it was surprising.

The only thing he had was a bag that seemed to be his luggage. There's no weapons on his self. His red coat seems to be an armor though.

He didn't prepare anything to travel through the desert.

The presence of a hyuman.

It is certainly the presence of a hyuman, but it is heavily different from the one I know.

Thoroughly different.

“Y-You are the superior dragon Grount?”

“... That's right. Do you wish for my blessing?” (Grount) “Blessing? No. I just came because of an errand. Grount-san, you are Root's Oba-san<aunt>, right?” (Makoto) “Root?! Oba-san?!” (Grount)

Root's acquaintance?!

No, more importantly! Oba-san he says?!

“Uhm, there's something Root entrusted me with. He said: ‘it would be best to leave it under the care of an Oba-san, so I am counting on you’.”

“... You said it twice...” (Grount)

“Hah?”

Yeah. There’s no need to confirm it.

He said it twice.

This boy, he certainly said it twice.

“If you are an acquaintance of Root, you should at least know that I am not related to her<Referring to Root>, right? In the first place, why do you think that being a superior dragon makes us relatives? It is strange when you think about it, right? If you think about the structure! And yet, you said it twice.” (Grount) “Eh? Eh?”

Even Root only says it once.

And she apologizes after doing so.

“I see. You don’t have any intention to apologize, right?” (Grount) “Ah, sorry! Frankly speaking, I don’t know much about the manners between dragons. Root only told me to bring this to you, that’s all! If there was any discourtesy in my words...”

If there was any discourtesy, he says.

In other words, he doesn’t understand what was the discourtesy.

Guilty.

This is not on the level of whether he is an enemy or not.

Let me teach you the proper way of treating an older lady!!

Root is also guilty.

She send such a strange hyuman in.

She should faint from the agony of the increased work she will get if I am killed by this person!

I was thinking about being young again, so this is convenient.

Normally, I had someone who I have blessed to assist me in my suicide, but with this, it will save me the trouble.

I don't care anymore.

In any case, I am angry now.

I am angry!!

"Then, I will teach you the etiquette of dragons. Stand upright." (Grount)
"Upright? Eh? U-Uwaa!!"

I let out a roar at the boy that doesn't seem to understand the situation.

Most of the humans won't be able to move with this, but as expected, it didn't work on him.

As if being pushed, I head to the exit of my shrine.

A drying breath that snatches away the water, a burning breath that reaches the bone, and the strongest scales prided by the peak of dragons, making it possible to take every attack with my own body.

I will welcome you with my most difficult trial.

Under the sunlight that mercilessly shines down, I confronted him.



"By the way Tomoe-dono, was it really okay to have Waka-sama go by himself?"

"You are referring to Grount, right? In that case, there's no problem. That person, even if she is a dragon, she has a quiet personality and doesn't like fighting. Waka is also pretty polite towards strangers-ja. He will probably not say the prohibited word."

A male and female pair were walking together in the streets of the Empire.

The man was slightly worried, but the woman didn't seem to be worried at all.

Tomoe and Shiki.

Accompanying Raidou, they had come to the Empire. His followers.

"It is okay if that's the case though." (Shiki)

“That doesn’t matter. Waka will probably be returning by evening after all. So let’s continue our survey, Shiki.” (Tomoe) “Tomoe-dono, it seems like you have been in good mood since yesterday.” (Shiki) Shiki speaks to Tomoe who was visibly high in spirit.

“Hmph, you can tell huh. It’s just that Waka did something slightly pleasant-ja yo.” (Tomoe) “Waka-sama did? Is it when he spoke to the hero yesterday?” (Shiki) “Yeah, at that time-ja.” (Tomoe)

“Gritonia’s hero, Iwahashi Tomoki. Seeing this Empire that has been spread with the charm disease, leaving aside his ability, it looks like there’s a problem with his character.” (Shiki) “That part, Waka gave him a good scolding-ja na. Scolding.” (Tomoe) “The details... he didn’t voice it out, right?” (Shiki)

“I was able to guess it. Really, nice job.” (Tomoe)

“Is that so. Then Tomoe-dono, from now on...” (Shiki)

“Umu, Waka also spoke about the atmosphere of the Empire but, you understand, right?” (Tomoe) The eyes of Tomoe narrowed slowly.

“Of course. The situation of the gun development, the details of the hero’s achievements in war. In the remaining time, let’s go collect information.” (Shiki) Shiki crooks his mouth into a smile.

“Then we will divide. First of all, let’s lose the people shadowing us. The appointed time and place, Shiki, don’t get them wrong.” (Tomoe) “To tell you the truth, I am slightly interested in the food of the Empire. But I won’t be late.” (Shiki) “I don’t think it would rival Asora though.” (Tomoe)

“Even so, it might help bring out some new ideas. That’s how I think.” (Shiki) “Well then.” (Tomoe)

“We will meet later.” (Shiki)

With one blink, the figure of those two disappeared from the sight of the people that were silently watching from the shadows.

Chapter 181: Devised Decision, the Desert's Dream

“Next time, I am looking forward to the discussion on setting up a stall.”

“I will think about it. I do consider Lily-sama as an important customer after all. Today I don't see the hero-sama though. Well with this, I will be taking my leave. Thank you for inviting me.”

“I will believe in those words.” (Lily)

I return the greetings of Princess Lily who went through the trouble of seeing me off at the teleport formation, and announce my departure.

From what I have seen, I don't feel like putting a store in the Empire, but I didn't voice out my rejection.

After giving the egg of Lancer to Grount who was rampaging and had to calm down, I returned to the capital when evening had come.

I didn't expect a superior dragon to get angry when touching the topic of age. Because you know, they are dragons that have been living for hundreds to thousands of years, and reincarnating. In essence, they live forever, so I thought they had lost the concept of age already.

Its blaze, roar, tail, and the magic that utilized the advantageous desert terrain; she rampaged quite a lot.

After I incapacitated her, I was finally able to speak with her.

I apologized to Grount-san once again, and when I spoke with her, I learned that she is actually a dragon with an age comparable to that of an adult woman.

When living for long, their personality stops changing at some point in time depending on the person, probably.

If things like Oba-san, or Oba-chan which are related to age are not mentioned, she is actually quite the gentle one.

Regarding my studying of the dragon society Root mentioned, I thought

he was referring to the Sand Sea.

Its appearance was a mystifying white desert, and that sand must have drunk quite the amount of blood from people as well, so it is some kind of stage where the history of humans and dragons has developed.

The other superior dragons have kindreds or people that serve them, so Root probably intended to show me those kind of things.

I wasn't the only one who thought that his actions were of bad taste; Grount was also angry at Root.

It is great that nothing serious happened.

By the time I returned to Ruinas it was already dark, but Tomoe and Shiki had finished packing and were waiting for me. And so, we were now returning just as planned.

Tomoe and Shiki who were mimicking me by lowering their heads, lift them up the moment I lift it as well.

Now then, let's head back.

"When you have any business, please contact Rotsgard. If there's something our side can prepare for you, we will happily do so." (Makoto)

"Please do give us a call. Well then, take care in your journey." (Lily)

I couldn't see any expectation from Princess Lily's face.

I think she had some sort of reason when she had me meet the hero, but...Tomoki is not here right now. I just can't read the actions of Gritonia.

They probably have some sort of complicated objective that isn't related to defeating the demon race in the war.

When that time comes, it will be made clear.

At the very least, I slightly understand how the Empire views us, so the standing I will be taking has been decided.

In that point, I think it is a high plus for me in coming to the Empire.

Enveloped by the teleportation light, the scenery changes.

Let's quickly move and leave Robin. If we do that, we can return to Asora without worries.

When we return to Rotsgard, next will be the place of the Demon Lord-sama huh.

I will be going to Kaleneon for a bit and meet with Rona, was it.

Tomoe knows the meeting point.

Talk about Kaleneon will definitely come, so it seems I will have to put that into order as well.

For me, that's a desirable outcome.

Anyways, it was a tiring visit to the Empire.

I want to quickly go back and sleep.



"I see. In that case, you don't know what business Raidou had in going to the Sand Sea, right?"

"Sorry. He traversed through the desert at a baffling speed, so I was unable to follow him..." (Ginebia)

"I don't think Grount will do anything, but the connections of Falz are really a mystery. To think that he is acquainted with a superior dragon. He told me that he had some business in the Sand Sea, so let Raidou do as he wishes, but for him to take such actions was outside my expectations. I have been one-upped."

Receiving a report that the Kuzunoha Company had begun their teleportation, Lily called Ginebia to her room and asked about the details of the situation.

Even so, she only added a bit of information on top of what she had already reported when she returned. So the gist of it didn't change much.

She lost Raidou at the desert and doesn't know what he did after.

At the long distance, a loud sound rang out but it soon calmed down, and Raidou returned after a few hours.

Just in case, they are already trying to make contact with Grount and confirming her safety.

It was an abnormal situation.

“Tomoe and Shiki; those two followers of his were also lost from sight near the castle. The other party was not Limia or a demon race but a company, and yet, they really played us good.” (Lily)

“... Lily-sama, what do you think of them?” (Ginebia)

“The Kuzunoha Company? Right... they are an unknown factor. A bunch that I can’t tell whether they are allies or enemies. Regarding Raidou, from what Tomoki-sama says, he is a Japanese; in other words, an otherworlder.” (Lily)

“An otherworlder?! T-Then, is that person also a hero like Tomoki-sama?!” (Ginebia)

Ginebia was chanting her disbelief with an expression that didn’t hide her shock.

“It’s not sure. Tomoki-sama and Limia’s hero Hibiki appeared after receiving an oracle from the Goddess. But there have been several number of otherworlders that were not the case as well.” (Lily)

“This is the first I have heard of this. To think that there were people like that.” (Ginebia)

“Lorel has been hiding them from the foreign countries after all. It seems like they have taken in their customs you know? Have you heard about the Wise?” (Lily)

“Wise? If I remember correctly, it is a special rank in Lorel for people that possess special knowledge.” (Ginebia)

“Is how the foreign countries take it. In reality, it is Lorel giving special privileges to the otherworlders. That’s a Wise. Right now there’s not a single one, but there have been descendants from them, and that special knowledge is made as knowledge unique of that country.” (Lily)

“ ... ”

“Anyways, Ginebia, good work today. You can leave now. Get a good rest.” (Lily)

“Understood... Excuse—” (Ginebia)

“Ah, you can’t go to Tomoki-sama’s place today either, got it? Please let him be alone for now.” (Lily)

“?!! U-Understood.” (Ginebia)

Seeing off Ginebia, the smile of Lily’s face was erased.

She was able to call Raidou and central people of the company to the Empire, but the objective they were aiming for was practically a blank.

For her, this is not a pleasant result.

Lily didn’t think that with just this conversation she would be able to take in Kuzunoha Company. But even so, she wanted to get information about them, and if possible, she wanted to attract at least one store from Kuzunoha Company into their Empire.

If she could make them place a store, they would be able to analyze the products, and it would make it easier to make contact with them.

To go to Rotsgard every time there’s business is something not that desirable for Lily. Also, currently the chances are low, but if Raidou closes the store in Rotsgard, they would have to go to Tsige which is an outrageously remote region.

They may pick up when contacting them, but it is certain that it will be inconvenient.

(The most that was accomplished was... Tomoki meeting with Raidou huh. In that point, it resulted just as planned, and the part about Raidou being an otherworlder was unexpected, but a favorable result. Otherworlder. Even so, I don’t feel the power of the Goddess from Raidou. It might be related to why he is not a hero.) (Lily)

In this occasion, Lily learned that Raidou was an otherworlder, a Japanese.

That forced deduction of Tomoki that was almost like a false accusation

was easily proved right by Raidou himself.

(An unsightly appearance uncharacteristic of humans, and he is not a demi-human. Tomoki probably said this haphazardly with this as basis, and yet... I see, that his close aides were not flustered by this, it is possible that this may be a lie. It is certainly true that there's few pluses in revealing his own background at that moment. Tomoe and Shiki have quite the sharp minds after all. But...is there a merit in lying about being Japanese? If his relationship with Tomoki is just as I predicted, then it is safe to assume that Raidou has no will to be taken into the Empire.) (Lily)

"Fuh..."

A small breath leaked out from Lily's mouth.

Walking, she had left her room, and was now heading to the room of Tomoki.

After the talk with Raidou, Tomoki had shut into his room and was alone without even taking his meals.

Because he himself wished to do so, his party members were unable to enter, and Lily also prohibited it.

(First I have to confirm with Tomoki huh. And with that, I will know what Raidou did. I might also be able to tell the depth of his power.) (Lily)

Knock knock

After a gentle knock, Lily confirmed that there was no reaction.

"... Tomoki-sama, it is Lily. The Kusunoha Company has left. Please tell me about what happened the other day." (Lily)

"Lily, right now I can't meet you. Please let me stay alone for a bit, just a bit more." (Tomoki)

A weak voice.

"Just what in the world happened? They are guests I invited. If Raidou did something, that is my sin as well. Tomoki-sama, I implore you, please let me into the room." (Lily)

After that, Lily flattered Tomoki and thoroughly comforted him.

That state of self-depreciation from Tomoki is a state that Lily is familiar in dealing with.

After a while passed, the door that silently opened was proof of her expertise.

“... Please enter, Lily.” (Tomoki)

“Tomoki-sama... just what in the world happened? Being this depressed!” (Lily)

Changing her Noh mask expression into one on the verge of crying, Lily shows Tomoki worry with her whole body.

Entering the room, Lily sits beside Tomoki who is sitting at the bed. She kindly listened to the story between Raidou and Tomoki while giving signs of comprehension.

Being attacked by surprise, he tried to fight back, but being unable to, he received his threats and violence, is what Tomoki said. That he was unable to obtain Tomoe.

(Tomoki says this. In that case, not only did the valkyries not pose any threat, Tomoki himself was completely defeated by Raidou. The attack that made Sofia retreat can't be used indoors, and his combat equipment was at its minimum at that moment, so it can be one of the reasons. Just that, Raidou himself didn't seem to have anything resembling a weapon. Maybe he is a magician, or it might be that he has trained as a warrior. From what I hear of Tomoki, it might be reasonable to consider that it can be both of them. A magician with a trained body huh. A troublesome type. Also, even if he wasn't at his best, to be able to overwhelm Tomoki, he is a more troublesome existence than I originally thought.) (Lily)

Lily analyzes Raidou from the story of Tomoki while chipping off the dramatized parts.

Contrary to her action of holding Tomoki's hand gently, her mind was cold and composed.

(Adding to that, he has Tomoe, Shiki and Mio. His three close aides have out-of-boundaries strength. If only they had the thought of slaughtering the demon race, it is at a level that I would want to abandon this thing and change it for him. Is it because my patronage is weak? No, that's not it. I don't think that Hibiki will move according to my plans at all, and looking at Raidou's behavior towards demi-humans, my hopes of pulling him in are thin. Doing war is actually the best situation. Because we can go around killing without any hesitation after all.) (Lily)

Lily was thinking about pulling in Hibiki or Raidou, but she soon erased that thought from her mind.

Even if it's possible, it would still be an hindrance in her own plans.

"Tomoki-sama, Raidou is the owner of frightening power, right? What should we do? Should we try pulling him into being our comrade? If Tomoki-sama so wishes, I..." (Lily)

"That guy Makoto... are you telling me to lower my head to him?" (Tomoki)

"... It is only for your sake, Tomoki-sama. If he turns into an enemy, it might turn everything into a mess. If it is okay, Ginebia, Yukinatsu, Mora, and I can endure a bit of the burden." (Lily)

She doesn't know if Raidou wishes for women.

No, since he directly spoke with Tomoki, she understood that the chances of that are low.

If she were to think about it calmly.

"Lily..." (Tomoki)

"Also, if we bring Kuzunoha Company to our side, as a result, Tomoe will be brought to our side as well. It will also grant your wish." (Lily)

"Tomoe!" (Tomoki)

"Yes. Then, I will quickly send a subordinate to—" (Lily)

"You can't!!" (Tomoki)

Tomoki shouts at Lily who was about to stand up.

“Tomoki-sama?” (Lily)

(Right. There’s no way you would be able to stomach something like that. As a hero, you wouldn’t be able to stomach the existence of Raidou. If it’s Hibiki, it would be possible to do it with a smile though.) (Lily)

Lily laughs from within.

Tomoki who can’t stomach having someone above him, would never be able to allow Raidou to ‘come’ to the Empire.

Then, what should she do?

That’s Lily’s objective.

Using Raidou, she will lead Tomoki into reaching a decision he once hesitated to take.

For the current Tomoki, this will probably look like the web of a spider suspending in hell, is what Lily imagines.

And that image was not that far from the truth.

“I don’t need someone like that. I am a hero. I will bring down the demons and the Demon Lord; an existence that reigns over the world. It doesn’t matter if he is Japanese as well. Like hell I will rely on that guy.” (Tomoki)

The hero’s duty-or at least that’s the title the Goddess has given to them-was to defeat the demon race, that’s all.

The last part about reigning was something that Lily had taken her time to imprint in Tomoki’s mind.

“... But he is strong. At this rate, he might become an obstacle.” (Lily)

After this, she only needs to slowly lead him into it.

Lily was calmly leading him into a decision.

“Then I just have to get stronger. Right, there’s no need to hesitate huh. That’s all there’s to it.” (Tomoki)

“No way. Tomoki-sama is even using that power that chips away your very life to fight against the demon race. Just what other kind of power are you aiming to have in that body of yours?” (Lily)

The new power that Tomoki obtained.

Lily heard that this is a powerful magic that can defeat in one hit the person considered the peak of this world, the Dragon Slayer.

It has quite a large range, and without any decay in strength, it activates at its highest output; a shining flame. Moreover, if by chance the target survives, it will inflict a special poison. In a war, it is a power that is scarily effective.

It has the price of chipping off Tomoki's life, so it is something that can't be abused, but Lily is sure that he would be able to use it without hesitating when in need.

For Lily, this new power of Tomoki gave her incredible joy. But because of this reason, she was troubled by the possibility of Tomoki obtaining a new power. No, accurately speaking, she was scared of the risk that comes from the acquisition of a new power.

He has obtained a spell that shaves off his own life, so she is most likely scared of the possibility of gaining another power that might affect his life.

“Lily, about what you said before leaving to Rotsgard, you can still prepare it, right?” (Tomoki)

“... Tomoki-sama, that's poisonous to the body. It is something involved with the Empire's research team that does body modification to go against the demon race. I think that there's no need for Tomoki-sama now that you have obtained such a splendid power.” (Lily)

“No. In the end, even my charm was useless with Tomoe. But... if it's not enough, I just need to increase it. She is a dragon. Then if I get a dragon element in me like Mora and make it one with my power, I will be able to obtain a charm power that even she can't go against! Also, if I obtain the aptitude for more powers, it will also affect my attack power. Any

elements that will make me stronger, place them all in me!" (Tomoki)

"Tomoki-sama, you can't! Even if you defeat the demon race, what would be the point if you don't have life remaining by the time you will reign? Please take care of your life." (Lily)

"... I will win. At the war and everything else. If it doesn't end in my complete win, there's no point. I don't want to live by lying to myself anymore. I...will do whatever I wish and live without any regrets! I will crush Raidou and the demon race. I will make Tomoe mine. Like hell I will give up!! Lily, if you are not going to cooperate, I will do that method even if it's without you. I will definitely reach it!!" (Tomoki)

The eyes of Tomoki were filled with a dangerous light.

"For you to be...this cornered..." (Lily)

Lily faces away and trembles as if overcome with emotion.

"Please. I know it is conceited of me after rejecting it once already, BUT please lend me your strength! I wish for power. This is the first time I have tried so hard. I don't want to give up!!" (Tomoki)

"..."

"Lily!" (Tomoki)

"Under...stood. Please rest for today. I will do the preparations." (Lily)

"Thanks! Thanks, Lily!" (Tomoki)

"If you feel anything out of order in your body, definitely tell me please. Okay?" (Lily)

"Got it. I will show you that I can definitely bring victory to the Empire!!" (Tomoki)

"I will be waiting for that day with my whole heart. Well then, please rest Tomoki-sama." (Lily)

Receiving the words of Tomoki with her back, the princess that had an expression as if resolving herself to a heavy decision, turned around and lowered her head.

A while after she left his room, Lily returns to her own room with her grave expression still plastered on her face as she walks the corridor.

The state of the princess that showed it was not a trivial matter had spread through the castle, and it created several speculations.

And then, when she returned to her own room which she had security increased around, and threw herself to her canopy bed facing up.

Covering her eyes with her right arm, her mouth crooked into a smile.

“Kufufufu... ahahaha!! Just how gullible can he be?! Even if we win the war, Tomoki has already lost his peace and his time for enjoyment. Good job cutting his last remnant of hesitation. Raidou, thank you. If I just bring out your name, the Tomoki from now on will thoroughly desire power. You have done at least this much, ufufu.” (Lily)

The monologue of the laughing princess continued.

More power to Tomoki.

More pain to the demon race.

A big fire will fall upon this time of war.

As if charmed by Tomoki-no- charmed by war, the princess repeats her crazed laughter.

“... Really, an ideal hero. We were really destined to meet each other, Tomoki. It is not Raidou or Hibiki but you who will be the hero that grants my wish. That’s how it is... that’s how it is, right Goddess?” (Lily)

Just once, she whispered coldly with blank eyes as she gazes at the distance.

After that, she continued her loud laughter for a while, and in time, she had gone to sleep.

◆◆◆◆ Makoto’s Dream ◆◆◆◆

<Two Makotos will be showing up. But you are already acquainted with this anyways.>

Uhhh...

A desert huh.

I certainly did go to a desert today.

Returning to Asora with Tomoe and Shiki, I received a report about the Empire's hyuman body experimentation and its use in war, information about the Valkyries, and also about the research of guns.

I did ask them to investigate the atmosphere of the city, but the two of them really did get quite the deep information there.

There was one point that was in my mind.

The guns.

Princess Lily who had heard about this concept from Tomoki was zeal in recreating them.

Just that she was unable to solve the problem of spontaneous discharges and its size. In the end, the result was that they were able to recreate a handgun and rifle that Tomoki knows of, which requires a high amount of magic power. It couldn't properly shoot a metallic bullet.

If we take it from a different perspective, a somewhat skillful magician would be able to utilize this weapon for self-protection.

The cost doesn't match its performance and its usage in real scenarios is still low. Or more like, it just turned in a rare weapon.

Tomoe said that there's practically nothing to expect from its combat performance in the future.

From the victims of the spontaneous discharges, she set her sight on gunpowder and has changed her plan into utilizing them as bombs and its utilization.

In this world they can use magic power to increase its power, but it is a tool that can be used even by normal soldiers and civilians. At the current state, it is actually taking form.

She is truly tenacious.

Explosives and hyumans.

I don't think that's a good combination.

If you ask me which one I think is more dangerous between guns and explosives, it's something I can't judge yet.

But well, this is just my impression from the report I received about the Empire.

--

Right now, I am looking at a desert.

It is not the white sand sea.

I was sleeping at Asora after all.

...

I see.

In other words, this is a dream huh.

This time it is a quarter-view huh. How complex.

"Even in this world, the moon of the desert is beautiful. What do you think?"

A voice.

Low and masculine.

It sounded like the voice of a man at the prime of his life.

"Hah... is that something you should say at this moment, Makoto?"

Makoto?

Does that mean, it is me?

?!!!!

Eeeh?!

When I follow the voice and look, there were two shadows at the desert's night.

"Is it because it doesn't compare to the one of the White Desert? It is sad to say but, I haven't gone to the deserts of Earth. It is certainly true that

someone like me shouldn't be saying this huh." (Manly Makoto(lol))

... A beard.

My wording of 'boku' has turned into 'ore', and I have a beard.

This... just who is this Raidou-san?

"Are you an idiot? This is a desert you created yourself. That's why I am telling you what in the world you are saying."

"No matter who has created it, a desert is a desert, right? Tomoki."
(Makotwo)

Tomoki.

Ah, certainly.

It is Tomoki.

There's plenty resemblance.

Yeah.

"You go talking about people being crazy, but you know, you are the one that is the craziest. Would you normally go changing a country into a desert? And with only one hit of a magic spell." (Tomoki)

"Tomoki, didn't you also use a spell that copies nuclear bombs? I think that's also inhumane you know. It is plenty into the madness territory."
(Makotwo)

"Don't put me in your same level. Mine has a demerit of shaving my own life, and I use it with the objective of instilling fear in my opponents. If they surrender with that one attack, it is possible to avoid needless deaths in the war." (Tomoki)

"...That's your way of putting it. That power of yours was unnecessarily accelerated by the madness of Lily. And that...has made it impossible to return everything to how it originally was." (Makotwo)

Things about nukes and creating deserts, what a dangerous conversation.

It was like that at the last dream where senpai appeared, but these

dreams are way too violent.

I...do I have a dangerous ideology?

Maybe I just haven't noticed it yet. Am I tired?

"Can't return? Hyumans had to destroy the demon race. Because Hibiki died an early death, the weight of it all came onto Gritonia. If you are wailing about the acceleration of the war, go blaming that incompetent Hibiki." (Tomoki)

"Senpai huh. That person too, if you or I were to go help her, there was a chance she would have been saved. We could have avoided her dying helplessly against Io." (Makotwo)

"Stop the 'if' talk. At that time, we had to increase the defense of our own country. This was Lily's decision as well. Also, don't go assuming things. If I hadn't picked your dying self from the border of the world, you wouldn't even be existing right now, you know?" (Tomoki)

"You really bring out quite the old talk. About that case, I am actually grateful you know. Travelling through that desert for more than one week, I who was prepared for death, was given shelter by you guys. Looking back, I might have been happier if I just died at that time though." (Makotwo)

"Keh. And yet, you did quite the big thing. What's with this? Is this how you repay your benefactors?!" (Tomoki)

"It's not like I went against your orders, right? This was Lily's will. That's why I haven't gone against you until now. That's if you didn't give me any orders that would bring me harm, that is." (Makotwo)

"... 'Obtain Lorel', is what I told you though?" (Tomoki)

"That's why, I accomplished such an order that makes one question the sanity of it, and obtained it, right? This is Lorel. Do whatever you want with it. The people, history, knowledge; everything into dust. No, I turned it into sand, but this is without doubt Lorel Union." (Makotwo)

"What happened to the Valkyries that were with you?" (Tomoki)

“Sadly, they became sacrifices.” (Makotwo)

“So you killed them?” (Tomoki)

“What a bad accusation. They were just dragged into the plan and died, that’s all.” (Makotwo)

I-Incredible.

From their conversation just now, this desert is all Lorel Union?

And this is something I did with some sort of magic spell?

That me in the other dream clearly used Sakai in a different way than me. No, even if I say that the person there was me, it still feels incredibly weird.

“What about Yukinatsu who infiltrated first?” (Tomoki)

“Who knows. If she escaped, she should be somewhere; if she couldn’t escape, she died. In wars, people die. Enemies and allies alike.” (Makotwo)

“Even so, there’s no war where it is fine for allies to shoot the back of allies.” (Tomoki)

“Hoh... These are not the words I expected to hear from the man that killed all the emperor candidates and the parties that supported them, and turned into the next emperor.” (Makotwo)

“The emperor candidates and the ones following them were the minority though!” (Tomoki)

“You had already charmed almost all the other people after all. The people that remained were the loyal retainers that weren’t bewildered by it. That charm of yours won’t make what you did right.” (Makotwo)

“... The citizens, bureaucrats, and the army as well; they were wishing for my enthronement.” (Tomoki)

“That’s also the charm. I don’t know why you made me increase the power of that charm and why you depended on it.” (Makotwo)

“... What did you say?” (Tomoki)

Uh.

What this me just said... I actually think the same way.

Why is this guy so stuck into charm?

This may be a dream, but the Tomoki that I met at the Empire was also dependant on it and seemed to be using it frequently.

“Instilling others to have a good opinion of you. That means you are dyeing others into your own colors.” (Makotwo)

“And what about it? What’s wrong with it? Using one’s own charm as weapon is not really something strange.” (Tomoki)

“This is not charm, you are charming them. To plant your own will into others. Putting it in another way, you are just mass producing people that follow your own image. Forcefully instilling deep affection into the minds of others, you make them your slaves. Someone narcissistic like you probably doesn’t pay it any mind, but from my point of view, this is not mutual understanding but masturbation.” (Makotwo)

“Y-You!!” (Tomoki)

“I won’t say that Hibiki-senpai’s charisma is any different from your charm. If I had to talk about personal relationships, the two are practically the same after all. But you grew too dependant of it. As a result, in the Empire there’s only you and your puppets. It became a country of zombies.” (Makotwo)

“Shut up...If I didn’t do that, people like you and Hibiki would be sprouting everywhere!!” (Tomoki)

“So you don’t need people that go against your will huh. I see. My olden question has been answered.” (Makotwo)

“... Talking all high-and-mighty. Then what about you? Lily, she was also one of my slaves. The first woman I turned into a slave. And you who were attached to her and turned a country into sand, what about you? Try saying something!” (Tomoki)

I-Is this a flow where I am in love with Princess Lily?

No, this me?

What a fantasy-filled development.

“Lily was not caught in your charm at all. Even in her dying breath.”
(Makotwo)

“... What?” (Tomoki)

“She was only using your power. In the time of the Goddess’ silence, Lily had lost her mother. Unable to eliminate that sadness, unable to accept that reality, she had lived in the political world just like that. Those warped feelings must have made her view the existence of a hero as amusing. The Goddess that goes silent or saves humans at a whim, the Goddess that didn’t save her parents. A hero that was given so late. That’s you, Tomoki. Lily was wringing you, using you to slaughter the demon race, and then was trying to turn a mess of the Empire that let her parents die. No, in essence, it was fulfilled huh.” (Makotwo)

“Wring me out? Lily was? You... Makoto, what in the hell are you saying?” (Tomoki)

“If I had met Lily, if I had met her earlier than you, it might not have led her into such a road of madness and sadness. A stupid decision from indecisiveness that led to her death. I can’t lament it enough.” (Makotwo)

“So you go venting on me huh. In the end, you are just getting chained by the past, and completely ignoring the present and the future it will bring!! If you had such power, you would have been able to finish the war a lot more simply. Something like Lily, if you didn’t mind used goods, I wouldn’t have minded giving her to you if you just grovelled.” (Tomoki)

“... Can’t be helped. The moment I noticed my power was when I killed the Demon Lord after all.” (Makotwo)

“...Ah?” (Tomoki)

!!!

Killed the Demon Lord?!

I don’t think this way.

I don’t hold any affection for the princess, and I don’t have any

intentions of killing the Demon Lord.

I am not thinking about any of these at all!!

Princess Lily is indeed an older and beautiful girl, and is slightly to my taste but!

“At that moment, I craved power for the first time. While you were pathetically lying down on the floor. The awakening that resulted from this, was neither a grateful thing nor a good timing at all. Because it was already all too late. Just like what you said, I am venting on you, and while at it, picking a fight on that trash Goddess. That’s the only thing I could think of.” (Makotwo)

“The Demon Lord...was killed by me with that spell...” (Tomoki)

“You only made the Demon Lord get serious. While you were comfortably sleeping, I killed them. The Demon Lord, and the demon race as well. And, I will be killing you now.” (Makotwo)

“What are you saying...” (Tomoki)

“If I do that, the Goddess will also come out. If she doesn’t, I will just have to create one or two more deserts. It is like increasing the size of the World’s Border. I wonder how long will that Goddess stay silent for. Looking forward to seeing that.” (Makotwo)

“This world finally finished its battle you know?! Isn’t it natural to create peace from now on?! You, did you go completely insane?!” (Tomoki)

“Having peace after a war, who decided that? Once war is over, another war will occur. Those kind of cases happen too.” (Makotwo)

“...Seriously, I shouldn’t have saved you at that time. Understood, I will be bringing you to hell here. Let me tell you, your spell won’t work on me. It will be one sided, but don’t complain.” (Tomoki)

“While it is night, right? Your immortality is also a power that the Goddess gave you. I don’t care. I will be killing you until morning. Go to the netherworld as the sun rises.” (Makotwo)

Hey hey hey, is it turning into a fight?

But how will this me be fighting? I have a slight interest in it.

Because he has an attack that can create a desert.

Also, I am interested in the sword he has in his hand.

I don't have any knowledge in swords. But does this me have? If he does, just what kind of sword style will he swing with?

I want to see.

I want to overwatch this.

The previous dream had ended in the middle but this time...

Eh.

What.

My vision is fading.

The two fighting are growing distant.

A change of vision as if being lifted up.

The desert steadily shows a full picture. Ah...

"... Damn it, as expected, a dream. It is a dream I don't see at the Empire or at Rotsgard though." (Makoto)

I silently open my eyes in my sleeping face-up position.

"But I had turned into quite the stern-looking old man. He was even saying 'ore'. As usual, Tomoe and the others were nowhere in sight."
(Makoto)

Also, I was in the wastelands for more than one week, was it?

If I were to totter that much, I certainly could die.

That time I was thrown into the borders, depending on where I stepped into, I might have ended up that way as well.

My back feels chilly just thinking about it.

"Since making archery a habit in Asora, this happened. I know that this is not a precognitive dream, but it leaves a bad aftertaste." (Makoto)

I can't go back to sleep, so while thinking that using the bow might not be a bad idea, I was somehow able to get up but couldn't get in the mood.

I forcefully wrap myself in my blanket and closed my eyes to the dream funnel.

Chapter 182: The Foggy Morning

“Well then, take care Waka-sama.”

“Take care Raidou-se-no, Raidou-dono.”

Kaleneon’s national border.

A winter morning covered in thick mist.

At the bridge hanging at a cliff, a group was lined up with their heads lowered at the three that were departing.

The back figure of the three were already thinly hidden by the mist and had turned into shadows.

Not only is it a cold early morning, in this day where even mist came out, the cold felt even stronger. But the people that saw them off didn’t shiver one bit and acted firm.

But the state was slightly strange.

From within their group, there were many shadows that didn’t belong to humans.

“Now then, by the time they return, I need to have another report ready.”

From the two that were at the front of the group that saw them off, one of them opened its mouth. The voice that came from the slightly small body was the voice of a woman.

But the figure of the girl was not that of a human.

“T-They are really going to meet the demon race. As always, what an unpredictable person.”

Another one also opens its mouth.

This one is also a woman. A human this time.

“Eva, we are returning. Is that okay? Having crops that can be grown in winter, you did tell me that proudly, so we will be continuing with that.”

“Ema-san, I did say I had some in mind, but what’s important is that there’s not enough arable land for planting. First we should cultivate new

land and keep an eye on the progress of—” (Eva)

“I have already confirmed it. Slow. Honestly speaking, the actions of you girls are just slow. In the future, I won’t be accepting excuses blaming the winter. Ah also, I will be checking the tax rate again.” (Ema)

“Uuuh, about the tax rate, because we are beginning at a point where we have practically no national treasury, I think that currently, this is the time where we have to save as much of the country’s money as possible. Of course, I did put the livelihood of the residents first and placed a tax rate that is on the level of the large countries. I did it with the belief that this was the most conventional method of tax rate.” (Eva)

A conversation between Eva and Ema.

Even if their names are similar, their standings seem to be quite different.

Most of all, it was a conversation of a hyuman and a race that’s not hyuman, so it is quite rare for the hyuman to be the one at the lower standing.

“What’s conventional about a 7:3 government. Waka-sama has gone through the trouble of arranging the residents and entrusted their lives to us, no matter the race, I won’t accept starvation and dying from cold.” (Ema)

“7:3-what?” (Eva)

“The land-tax system from the Edo period would work better in this situation. Seriously, something as important as getting a country, and the concerned party in charge of the ruling only has this level of intelligence. I can only call it stupid. In this country where there’s a mixture of hyumans and demihumans, there’s no way we can use the common sense of hyuman’s country creation.” (Ema) <In this tax system, the government takes half of the year’s crops while the farmers keep the other half.>

“... Sorry.” (Eva)

In this scolding that could be taken as unreasonable, Eva honestly apologizes.

Because in the while that she has been acquainted with the woman called Ema, she has more or less understood her skills and personality.

Eva didn't understand the meaning of the words 7:3 government or the land-tax system of the Edo period, but Ema must have judged that the tax system she was about to set was not the most appropriate one.

(I thought that the Orc race, even if their names and figures were different, they were all simple-minded people who were driven by instinct. Highland Orcs, those girls, I don't know where this race inhabits, but they have knowledge on the level of scholars. Though imperfect, I was a librarian at the Academy, and yet, I can't hold a candle to these people. Raidou-sensei, the people supporting you from the back, there's really not a single normal one.) (Eva)

Eva was introduced to Ema by Makoto the moment they arrived at Kaleneon.

'She is a kind and dependable person.' Is what he said as he made her face an Orc.

Eva who had pledged in her heart to throw away her common sense and stop thinking that things are abnormal, had her determination crushed in an instant.

To think that there would be a scene in her life where she would have a conversation with an Orc, Eva wouldn't be able to imagine it even in her wildest dreams, so it couldn't be helped.

Having her native country destroyed, losing her territory, and condemned by her relatives; in that severe standing, Eva who was half-controlled by madness, met Raidou-Makoto – at Rotsgard, and that madness of hers was blown away.

With these consecutive events outside the boundaries of common sense, maybe she is getting her sanity back, or it is just that a new type of madness is dyeing her now; she probably doesn't know clearly yet.

"What about the other situations?"

Ema turned to her back.

There stood a blue scaled Lizardman, an orc that has a bigger build than Ema, a white winged winged-kin, and a dwarf who has around the same height as Ema.

“...Right. Leaving aside Eva’s words, isn’t there any place that can be reclaimed currently? If it’s new land for cultivation, we have quite a lot though. Also, if we just pointlessly reclaim leveled ground, in the current state where we can’t deal with the mamonos, it would be meaningless.”

The first one to respond was the Lizardman.

“Deal with, are you referring to that level of demonic beast? Within the populace that has come to Kaleneon, there’s adventurers and former adventurers. In terms of experience in battle, there should be a reasonable amount though?” (Ema)

Ema’s face turns serious at the report of the Lizardman.

“There are many that still haven’t adapted to the environment in this country. Also, we are lacking people with genuine talent. After the invasion of the demon race, the amount of humans that are used to doing work in a snowy environment are most likely low. In the first place, if there were survivors of people that lived around this area, the situation would have been slightly different.”

“There aren’t?” (Ema)

“There are only a few. Experienced in battle, there are zero. These probably has already reached your ears as well Ema-dono, but the bunch here are people that had been living by relying on the blessing of the Goddess. It is questionable how much knowledge they have about living in independence.”

“...Even if we have new land, security will be necessary. But there are few who would be able to properly guard against the mamonos, is what you are trying to say?” (Ema)

“That’s how it is. There’s a few adventurers, on a degree that we can barely use properly. It would be more realistic to bring more from the outside with requests, or having us assigned to it. According to the result

of the investigation, the demonic beasts that inhabit this country are more active in winter. From the report of Eva saying that if we are to do training it should be at a time other than winter, the results of that investigation are most likely not far from the truth.”

“Understood. Cooperation with the outside. Regarding the topic about bringing adventurers in, I will leave it as a suggestion for now. It would be pointless if we are the ones doing everything after all.” (Ema)

“Got it. But is it okay to continue the training and guarding for now?”

“Of course. I will be counting on you.” (Ema)

At this occasion, Eva barely spoke anything.

But there was no displeasure in her face.

It is not that she is hiding it.

In the time that she has been in contact with the mamonos and demihumans that Raidou has introduced her to, she had decided in her heart to learn their common sense.

The lines they are demanding are absurd, but in the first place, the very point of obtaining a country is also in the crazy and reckless class.

Raidou and the Kuzunoha Company that were able to accomplish that very feat in a land that was completely in control of the demon race, there’s no need to say that it is nothing but abnormal.

But she was the one who relied on them, and the whole current situation is that she has no one else to rely on in Kaleneon aside from them.

In that case, she resolves herself to move in the same standards as them.

That’s why she is in the middle of learning.

Ema and the other people are definitely not looking down on Eva.

They are not taking her lightly either.

They are only taking the action of training her as a proper representative of a country.

Scarily strict.

Eva was in a spot where even if she were to break, they wouldn't let her.

After the Lizardman stepped back, Ema looks at the Orc.

But the Orc who was looked at, shook his head to the sides.

"There's nothing to report on my side. We continue to collect information about the demonic beasts while securing food. Regarding the hunting, there's the point that it is centered in the adventurers, and its progress is reasonable. From Ema's perspective, it would probably be around 80% in terms of numbers."

"... So the other 20% is not catching up huh. Do you think we can still increase the number of people in charge?" (Ema)

"... There would be no problem, but if we want to certainly avoid unforeseen events, I would suggest we leave a few. Increasing the numbers is not always good. For us the guardians, and also for the people that do their best in hunting."

"Understood. I will be arranging it, so for now, I will leave it to three."
(Ema)

"Roger that."

After the short talk between Orcs, next is the Winged-kin that took a step forward.

Within the people here, it is the one who has the closest appearance to a hyuman, but the wings at its back negate that possibility. There's also several special traits that are different from a hyuman. Eva was greatly surprised when she learned that they are an heretic existence even among demihumans.

"There's no problem in the security of the national border. There were sightings of people that seemed to be demons, but they haven't invaded. There have been cases where some have ignored our warnings, turning into a fight. But we were able to crush them. There was no damage from our side."

"Good work. Then, is the number of personnel for the security and other

tasks appropriate at the moment?” (Ema)

“No need. The people that are put in charge of security are beginning to have free time in their hands. Because they are getting accustomed, the area they can be in charge of increases. This is thanks to Tomoe-sama’s training in the techniques to search enemies. There won’t be any problems in placing some in other tasks.”

“I see. That’s a great thing to hear. Then can you put out some candidates later?” (Ema)

“Understood.”

Kaleneon is a special country that has a cliff as their national border.

Its security has been tasked to the Winged-kin who possess the ability of flight, and they haven’t permitted any to invade.

To enter the current Kaleneon, it is completely necessary to have the permission of Kuzunoha Company.

And the last to step forward is the dwarf.

Before saying anything, he already had a troubled face.

“Now then, what should I begin with?”

“Is the deployment of tools being delayed as expected?” (Ema)

“That’s because in the current Kaleneon, no matter how many craftsmen like us are, it would never be enough. If there were more residents here specialized in the earth element, the situation might be a little different though. But the lack of personnel has reached a helpless level. Even so, we are in a situation where we can’t bring out more personnel from our ranks. I have suggested this before but, is it not possible to call other dwarfs to be residents? There’s a number of volcanoes at Kaleneon, and I have checked it out; it seems to be a relatively good environment for dwarfs to live in.”

“About that matter, we are waiting for the decision of Waka-sama. But it seems he is hesitating since they would probably have to recruit from Lorel Union.” (Ema)

“I feel bad for troubling Waka-sama. But I don’t think the dwarfs of Lorel have any attachment to the Union. Because no matter where we are from, we are craftsmen at heart. Even if we exclude the ones who went to the Spirit religion, it wouldn’t be a problem if the dwarfs themselves approve of it. Can’t you tell him this?”

“I will try and see. Just that, Waka-sama is in that state probably because it might turn into a situation where we are chipping off the national power of Lorel Union, so I am not sure if it will help in having him make a decision though.” (Ema)

“It is true that we would be taking potential away from their country if we were to bring them in. He even thinks about such difficult things. Anyways, we are lacking people on our side. Whether it is human or demihuman, if there’s anyone interested in being a blacksmith, I would like you to tell me immediately. Armors, farming tools, constructions; there’s a mountain of things to do.”

“I am sorry for having you go through so much work. I will try to take into consideration any candidates by today.” (Ema)

“I am counting on you. We will gather up the information of the dwarf community’s special traits in Lorel and anything that might prove useful for Waka-sama into documents. I will send them to you when we are done.”

“That would be a great help. Well then Eva, I think you already know but, we will be sleeping at the same time as always. Let’s return.” (Ema)

Eva who was lending an ear to their conversation with interest, stiffened her face at the sudden words of Ema.

Every other side has already turned to town and beginning their return.

“As always? Uhm... I feel like in these three days, I haven’t slept properly at all though. Is that what you are referring to as ‘sleeping at the same time as always’?” (Eva)

“You are properly sleeping for 1 hour already. I have given you aiding medicine so that you don’t have any problems in health though? Are you

telling me you haven't been taking them?" (Eva)

"I am! It is because I am taking them that my heart is weary but my body is strangely energetic! How long will this kind of situation continue for?!" (Eva)

Eva, who was doing her best a few days ago, unable to see the end of this nightmare, she objects at the statement that was as if telling her this is how it will normally be.

"How long? Obviously, it will be until you have grown enough that you don't need our assistance. You are already an adult and still unable to give proper responses after all. Do give it your best." (Ema)

"Proper responses?! I was suggested such an absurd plan just like that! On top of that, Raidou-sensei didn't seem to have much knowledge in politics and management!!" (Eva)

"What are you trying to do by placing Waka-sama as a comparison. It is pointless. Lady, can you nonchalantly split earth?" (Ema)

"..."

"How stupid. Now, straighten your back and walk proudly." (Ema)

Ema rejects the cry of Eva and quickly walks forward.

Chasing after her, Eva desperately tried to straighten her back that felt as if it would bend at any moment.

"Eva, becoming a representative of a country is not something simple. Knowledge, wisdom, power. In this situation where we are living without getting involved with foreign countries, we can still look for stability. In the future when diplomacy begins, it will not be in this proportion. If you don't grow at a pace faster than what Ema-dono is setting, the future of Kaleneon will be dark."

"Seriously. You yourself don't have that overwhelming appeal that brings others together after all. The residents here are people that didn't live here originally, so bringing people together is a harsh task though. Knowledge and wisdom. And the easiest to obtain is knowledge.

Desperately learn.”

“Things like nobles and royalty; because you are hung by such things that are determined by heritage, you act spoiled when in a position of having land. If you want to stand on top of others, you will have to be able to show them something worthy of it.”

“It may be a dream that came from being half-crazed, but since it has been granted, you will have to undertake the responsibility. Give it up, you can’t escape.”

Catching up with the Lizardman, Orc, Winged-kin, and Dwarf; Eva received grateful words from them.

A wry smile was plastered onto her face.

“It might be more comfortable if I just end up crazy like in my time at Rotsgard.” (Eva)

“Madness huh. That might be good too. It would certainly give you more resolve and power than what your current self has.”

“What’s important is for you to have power befitting that of a ruler and are able to make decisions. There’s no need to be sane for that. Isn’t that fine?”

“Your results could disappoint Waka-sama. Even if you have to go crazy, you will have to show good results.”

“No matter how you end up, you will fall into the same situation, so isn’t sanity playing a big part in your happiness?”

Merciless words came flying.

“Everyone, please don’t spoil Eva-san. This girl will be carrying Kaleneon and lifting it up after all. She is a person that has exchanged such a contract with Waka-sama. To get it easier by going crazy is just—” (Ema)

‘There’s no way I would permit it.’

The last words that came from Ema were all reflected in the eyes of the others which were directed at Eva.

Eva hangs her head.

The revival of a ruined country.

That's a miracle.

And yet, it has been granted.

Then, the price of it, its compensation; no matter what it is, she has to pay it.

It has turned into something unbelievable.

Thinking that, Eva walks while looking forward.

If she were to meet her past self, she felt like telling herself to look properly at reality.

She held that small sentiment in her.



A thick mist is still covering the surroundings.

Already knowing that this is not a strange occurrence around these parts, the girl was thinking that it would have been better if mist hadn't come out today of all days.

Crossing her arms, she waits for the guests.

At her side there's a giant with four arms, and just like her, he was silently standing there.

At their back, there were elite demon soldiers lined up completely armed.

A twitch.

The giant opened his closed eyes and looked at the front.

"They are here?"

"Seems so. There are three."

"It would have been better if we had a clearer view, today of all days."

"Right. We are going to welcome that, and yet, having our vision this bad

makes me feel uncomfortable.”

“Guests huh.”

“Calling him Devil would be rude, right? It seems that time it wasn’t his true intentions. I think it would be proper to call him Raidou.”

“Right. Io, let me tell you just in case. Don’t go creating any trouble until we reach the capital, okay?”

“I return those words right back at you, Rona. After being dealt with so easily, there’s no way I would have hostility or anything like that. I only feel dread.” (Io)

“It is to the level that our Demon General ace has voiced out his dread. Moreover, for some reason, we are meeting them right at the center of our territory.” (Rona)

Rona let’s out a sigh.

She who is specialized in gathering information, was letting out her weakness at the guests that she couldn’t grasp.

She didn’t show this to the person in question through force of personality. Even she was showing slight weakness in a stage where they haven’t made contact yet.

“It is around a few tens of kilometers from the place that Reft had disappeared in huh. He doesn’t remember what happened at that place, and the reconnaissance of Kaleneon is also...” (Io)

“No results. At most, we only know that there’s a cliff where in the past there wasn’t. It is also unknown if there’s a bridge placed on it or not though.” (Rona)

“There have been casualties in our forces, right?” (Io)

“The ones that went too deep were wiped out. The whole unit is gone, so we don’t know what happened at all. It is hard to think that they are the ones involved in this, but the timing is just too fitting.” (Rona)

“In the end, the best choice would be to wait for Reft’s memories to recover huh. As long as there’s no more real harm, Kaleneon is not a place

with important value for us. There's no need to increase the damage by poking it." (Io)

"It is mortifying but that's how it is. Right now we have no choice but to leave it." (Rona)

(... I will be interfering a little from outside the army though.) (Rona)

Rona adds this inside her mind.

"But if they are involved with the abnormality of Kaleneon as you say, and on top of that, they are having us meet them at a place close to it..." (Io)

"..."

"The Kuzunoha Company, and also Raidou; they would be a sly bunch. That man didn't seem like the scheming type though." (Io)

"...Yeah. It seems like he has made his appearance." (Rona)

Io and Rona correct their posture.

From the mist, three shadows appear and their figures were soon visible.

"Did we make you wait much?"

The man at the very center looked at Io and Rona, and said this apologetically.

"No. In terms of time, I would say you are early. Welcome, Raidou-dono. And also your companions. Because of security reasons, we couldn't provide you a teleportation service. I thank you for your understanding in that. From here there's still quite the distance, but we will take responsibility in guiding you. Sorry for the late introduction, I am Io. I serve under the Demon Lord as a Demon General." (Io)

"You know already but let me do it again, I am Rona. Just like Io, I am one of the Demon Generals. It has been a while, Raidou. We have been waiting anxiously for your meeting with our Lord. I thank you for accepting this unreasonable request of ours." (Rona)

In contrast to Io's words, Rona gives a frank greeting.

Her expression was also serious and straight-laced, and her smile was gentle.

“Kuzunoha Company’s representative, name’s Raidou. Pleased to make your acquaintance. These are the friends I mentioned before, Mio and Shiki.” (Makoto)

“Mio-desu. Pleased to meet you.” (Mio)

“Shiki. I will be in your care.” (Shiki)

After Raidou made his introduction, the other two at his side make a light introduction as well.

The black haired girl wearing a black kimono introduced herself as Mio and seemed somewhat cold.

The red haired man wearing a white robe was gloom and composed. He introduced himself as Shiki with a smile. His introduction also had a notable attitude.

“Well then, it will be a journey of several days. Let’s depart.” (Io)

With the words of Io as a signal, the demon troops arrange their formation.

In this territory where humans have not stepped into for several decades, and the untrodden territory further beyond that humans have not arrived to; the Kuzunoha Company representative, Raidou, makes one step into it.

Chapter 183: Shiki-sensei once again

This is something i have thought in the White Sand Sea as well but, it seems this world still has a lot more mysterious places.

As expected of a fantasy world.

Being received by Io and Rona, we journeyed together with them for several days.

There would be a blizzard first thing in the morning, but a one-time per day cycle was normal. The attacks of mamonos were splendidly dealt with by the demons.

The mamonos that came out had the same lineup as the mamonos in Kaleneon, so I was contemplating taking them as reference to learn the methods of dealing with it.

What surprised me was the second day at noon.

It was still noon, and yet, when I thought it had become dark, the sky became black in one breath.

By the time we advanced for 1 short hour, it was already night.

The ground had changed into ice at several locations, and it felt as if we were brushing the surface. The blizzard had strengthened, and it made me think that this is a place that humans wouldn't be able to live in at all.

But maybe in this place this was a common occurrence, the demon side didn't show any panic, and created a barrier against cold just like they did at the first day as they continued their lively advance.

How fearsome is the northern country.

In the end, we advanced through a blizzard in what could be considered an everlasting darkness. A pretty rare to get experience.

At the third day...morning doesn't come.

Since 5 in the afternoon of the second day, it has been night all the time.

Do places exist where the sun doesn't come out? If that's the case, no

wonder it is so cold.

At this day, the demon race showed a slightly panicked state.

A type of mamono. If it were only that, it wouldn't be that out of ordinary though. It seems that the level of the enemy was higher than they thought.

A big-framed lion with quite the intensity. Its body hair is pure white.

I have not heard reports of its sighting in Kaleneon, and this is also my first time seeing it.

Several lion males(or so I think) with imposing mane attacked us.

For males to do the hunting is pretty surprising.

When they jumped at us, I could clearly tell its size.

The demon soldiers that stepped forward served as a measuring tool.

As big as a large-sized one box van.

And it was fast.

The demon soldiers that were hurriedly trying to fix their formation were crunch to death in an instant. It seems there were people that survived, but the people that had come out to my front were no good.

They may be people which I have only exchanged light conversations, but it gives me a sad feeling.

I don't know if this will serve as a memorial, but I will at least defeat these guys. When I thought about beginning, Shiki's hand hit mine.

When I look at his face, he shook his head to the sides.

I don't know why was that, but I decide to overlook the situation for a bit.

In the end, Io and Rona also participated in the fight, and the white lions were defeated.

After that, unexpected things happened multiple times.

Mamonos that were clearly stronger than the previous ones were

appearing frequently, and the soldiers that were accompanying us ended up wounded or dead.

The barrier for cold has been maintained and the pace hasn't changed, but this day made me feel as if I were wounded all over.

Looking back at it, I feel like it wasn't normal.

Right now we have finally gotten time for a break, and we were resting at the tent that Shiki had prepared.

Rona had prepared a tent for us as well, but we turned down the offer.

We did tell them that we would be bringing the necessary ourselves, but they probably were unsure if we would be able to properly calculate the coldness in these areas. It seems they brought our share as well just in case.

"Shiki, did you foresee that it would be this cold? This tent seems to have an impressive protection against cold." (Makoto) "Yes. The demon race territory is a land of intense cold after all. I made this tent so that it can be spread out immediately, and be able to deal with any type of environment." (Shiki) "That's a great help. But you know, it seems the demon race did prepare our share too but, was it okay to decline it?" (Makoto) "Yeah. Even if it is of lower quality than this, we will be returning to Asora at night to rest anyways, so wouldn't it be better to accept their good will?" (Mio) Ah, so Mio also held the same opinion as me.

In that case, it means there's some sort of problem in it huh.

I see.

Is there a chance that being lend things from the demon side will lead to spying on us?

"It is just that those things were prepared in anticipation that we would be unprepared, also, I don't want to rely on the things that Rona has prepared." (Shiki) As I thought.

"Well, that talk about Rona was a joke, but thinking about each other's

position in this journey, she wouldn't be able to do anything weird.”
(Shiki) ...

As I thought, I'm glad I didn't say anything.

Would it be okay to ask why?

It kinda makes me hesitate.

“Why-desu?” (Mio)

Naizu-desu Mio.

“Because we are guests they have invited, and Rona has taken the job of a guide by the orders of the Demon Lord. Even if she is like that, Rona is loyal to the Demon Lord, so she wouldn't do something like abandoning the mission. That's why, even if we use the tent they have prepared and go back to Asora, there wouldn't be any problems. Checking the inside of the tent is something that she would definitely not do.” (Shiki) “Isn't it fine to just do it without getting caught?” (Mio)

“I am here. She understands that if she were to get caught by me, it would all turn detrimental. And there's Waka's power overwatching as well, so that also plays a part.” (Shiki) Shiki really does know Rona well.

Instead of close friends, it feels more like a dog and monkey relationship though. <means bad relationship> “Hah... what a pain.” (Mio)

Mio does one sigh.

For these last few days, she hasn't been taking any satisfying meal at breakfast and lunch after all.

“Also, Waka-sama, I am sorry for stopping your hand a while ago.”
(Shiki) He lowered his head.

It is not really something that requires him to apologize.

I do want to hear the reason why though.

“You don't need to apologize. But what was the reason? I just thought about helping out for a bit.” (Makoto) “That's the reason. That was Rona's play, Waka-sama.” (Shiki)

“...Eh?” (Makoto)

“I don’t know if she anticipated the numbers as well, but that woman wanted to have Waka-sama cooperate by having a strong enemy attack.” (Shiki) No no, isn’t that being oversuspicious?

Their allies also suffered quite the bad time there too, you know?

“No well, that’s...” (Makoto)

“As proof, they were properly able to deal with it even without us going out ourselves, right? Deal with everything.” (Shiki) ...

A white lion, snow guardian dog, and a Frost Dragon that had scales resembling ice; it is true that the demons were able to deal with it by themselves.

But would that give enough foundation?

“... I still have a bit more basis. Even in that situation, they didn’t cut off the barrier against cold, and even when the people decreased, they soon rearranged their formation. It could be evaluated as splendid discipline, but for me, it looked like they were reacting in a way as if they had already anticipated it beforehand.” (Shiki) The barrier against cold was not dissolved even when in the middle of the battle.

They also quickly filled up the holes in their formation.

“Now that you mention it, there were several who were frequently keeping an eye on us while in battle. Rona was acting as normal though.” (Makoto) I didn’t notice at all.

Within that blizzard in the darkness, I didn’t pay much attention to my surroundings.

I gotta reflect on that.

“Yeah. The demons won’t request for cooperation from their side. But if we are the ones stepping forward to provide it, it would be possible. They would be able to see at least a bit of our side’s power, and it would also create a sense of camaraderie.” (Shiki) “So you are saying that they already expected the deaths of their subordinates?” (Makoto) “They must have

taken death into account. For the sake of knowing the whole picture, they were prepared to take sacrifices. To the point that even the demon race that hasn't grasped us completely, is welcoming us as country-level guests." (Shiki) That in itself is pointless though.

"For a mere company representative, this degree of reception is too exaggerated as expected huh. There's two demon generals after all."

(Makoto) "Yeah. Also, Io's self-introduction and Rona's greeting, did you notice?" (Shiki) That huh.

I also felt something slightly strange from that.

Even so, it is to the level that I wouldn't pay it any mind unless pointed out though.

"Yeah, something was strange there. Io was acting as if this were our first time meeting, and Rona was frank like the time before the event with the Variants." (Makoto) "Exactly. Io wanted to null what happened at the kingdom's capital, and Rona wanted to imply that her real self was the one before the Variant incident." (Shiki) What's with that.

"A-Are they not feeling well?" (Makoto)

But if that's the case... It was the right choice not to say: 'Didn't we meet at the Kingdom's capital though?'.

If I said that, it would be like completely negating the expectations of Io.

"The Demon Lord will probably say something regarding that, but I think that it does have that kind of meaning. In other words..." (Shiki)
Shiki cuts his words for a second and narrows his eyes.

"'We want to wash away the 'unintentional bad things' that happened and create a good relationship.' It seems like the demon race really wants Waka-sama and the Kuzunoha Company. At this rate, when we reach the capital, they might even make a parade for us. Kufufufu." (Shiki) Don't kufufu.

Aren't you turning into Tomoe, Shiki?

If you enter the dark side, my internal oasis will disappear.

Please spare me from that.

“A parade. If it were a party, there would be worth in it.” (Mio)

“Mio-dono, having a parade without a party is basically impossible. In the ranks of welcoming, a banquet is a basic after all.” (Shiki) “... Then that’s fine-desu ne.” (Mio)

Not good.

“If we talk about the characteristics of the demon race cuisine, it would be for example; a meat that they leave half frozen and make thin slices of it just like that to eat. Using different flavored ice, they make a variety of iced cuisine. The last time I went there, I only saw to that extent, but they are in such a prejudiced environment, so there should be a lot more than that.” (Shiki) “Are we going to enter the capital by today?” (Mio)

“No, I heard that today we will be staying the night at a town. The capital will be tomorrow.” (Shiki) “Eh, ah yeah, I am looking forward...to the frozen cooking.” (Makoto) I answered unconsciously.

...Cold food in winter huh.

Eating ice cream in a kotatsu is ordinary, but I wonder if that’s the same case here.

I stand up and look at the state outside.

An ice ground where we can’t see what’s ahead anymore, even the stars can’t be seen. Complete darkness and violent blowing wind and snow.

Only the sound of the strong winds resounded.

Even if you tell me about frozen meat and ice cuisine in a place like this, I don’t feel any sort of appetite welling up from me.



Clank

The door silently closes.

“Root! You...what’s with suddenly sending an out of common sense along with the egg of Lancer to the Sand Sea and making a mess out of it,

and Oba-san!!”

The young woman continued shouting words that had no coherence until she finally calmed down. Taking off her hood, she approaches the person that was at the end of the room.

Unbuttoning her tunic, she takes off her hooded robe and throws it away towards the sofa at the side.

“That’s quite the greeting-ja na, Sand Wave. It is our long time reunion and you suddenly come like this.”

“?!! Ah, sorry. I reflexively...” (Grount)

“As expected huh. Well, I believed that Makoto-kun would definitely be able to do it! The desert is an area that not even I can peek at, so in times like this, I truly regret not being able to see it!” (Root) The woman thought that he was alone, but seeing the person standing, she soon apologized and turned speechless.

And the woman that was at the depths of the room, had a wide smile as she herself walked towards the place where Grount is.

“You, Shen?! Eh, but I feel like you are slightly different...” (Grount) “I am Shen-ja yo. No, I was Shen would be a more appropriate way to put it. I have tied a ruling pact with a certain person you see. Right now I am faithfully serving him as a servant of his.” (Tomoe) “Pact? A...ruling one?” (Grount)

Grount wasn’t thinking when talking, it was as if she were returning answers inorganically like a parrot.

“Yeah. That’s why, I go by the name Tomoe. I recently went to the Empire you know. Together with my master.” (Tomoe) “Ara. If you had visited, I would have brought out tea. Don’t act so distant. But well, I was a bit busy myself so it can’t be helped huh. I am sorry for not offering any reception. Even though you went out of your way to walk out of the wasteland.” (Grount) Experiencing an unexpected reunion with an old friend dragon, the woman -Superior Dragon Sand Wave, named Grount-greets Tomoe.

As one would expect, she still doesn't understand the situation.

"Kuku, and so Grount, you had some business with me, right?" (Root)
Root sits at an opposite sofa from Tomoe and looks at the still standing Grount.

"!! That's right, Root! What's with that hyuman?! It was Lancer's egg, the egg of a superior dragon, you know?! And to entrust it to something like a hyuman!!" (Grount) "But he was strong, right?" (Root)

"W-Well that is..." (Grount)

"As expected, stronger than me?" (Root)

"At the very least, I felt more despair compared to the time when I was fighting you." (Grount) "Hah...so it was huh. That hurts. A fellow superior dragon is telling me in this way after all. Just what in the world is Makoto-kun trying to become?" (Root) Root throws his back towards the sofa and looks at the ceiling.

Contrary to his words, he looked quite happy.

"Makoto? No, he said his name was Raidou though." (Grount)

"Yeah, whichever is fine. Makoto-kun is Raidou after all. Well, you know, it is that; he has two names just like us. Don't mind it." (Root) "Is that so... then... like hell I will swallow that answer! I will have you explain it properly! About that ultima weapon-like hyuman, the reason why Lancer has turned into an egg, and the reason why I have to look after Lancer!!" (Grount) "... But you know Tomoe, it is incredible huh. There's this many superior dragons gathered in one room of the Adventurer Guild. This is a little like a summit, don't you think? Summit 5?" (Root) Grount has an incredibly threatening attitude beside Tomoe. Sitting right in front of Root, she draws closer to him.

But Root coolly washed away that stern expression of hers and throws the conversation to Tomoe.

"There's only the 3 of us in the room though." (Tomoe)

"How sad. If Grount had brought Lancer, it would have been 6." (Root)

“Even if you continue piling up words that are not getting through, there would be no point.” (Tomoe) “For us who gather rarely, this is quite the event though...” (Root) “Root!! Just what in the world are you saying!! I won’t be deceived!!” (Grount) Grount’s threatening attitude didn’t stop.

“I know. You are talking about Lancer, right? I will be explaining it now geez. See, here.” (Root) “... Hah?” (Grount)

Root takes out two eggs from who knows where and puts them on the table.

Grount’s eyes open wide.

Because she understood what those eggs were.

“This one is Night Clad, and this one here is Waterfall. And so, it is regretful. Aside from us, all the other superior dragons have been hunted down~!!” (Root) “... Uhm, eh?” (Grount)

“At first it was the Famed Sword, Lancer. The next would be Waterfall, and the one after was Night Clad. Crimson Red was the last one. Went around killing them all you see.” (Root) “I didn’t hear any of this you know?” (Grount)

“The superior dragons were being targeted, so don’t you think the person responsible had done the necessary to prevent it from getting out?” (Root) “!!! Don’t tell me, that hyuman was the one who did it?!” (Grount) “Heh. Ah, that’s wrong. He is the one who settled the problem. He defeated the offender. And so they became eggs. About Lancer, he doesn’t have anyone to take care of it, so I thought of leaving him to you. That’s why I requested Makoto-kun to do the errand.” (Root) “... Just who in the world was the one responsible?” (Grount)

“It is embarrassing to say but, the one responsible was a mixed breed of a hyuman and dragon that superbly inherited my blood. You see, it went absorbing the power of the defeated dragons and had become quite the crazy issue. Even the Empire’s hero-kun was at the verge of dying. Ah~, I’m truly sorry.” (Root) “The Empire’s hero. Ah, the charm one. Because that thing was there, I returned to my younger self and was thinking of being absent from the Empire for a while.” (Grount) Grount was showing

a suffering expression as if holding in a headache.

“We are in this state of situation, so do spare me from doing that. After things have calmed down, you can do it. In your case, you are able to reincarnate with your memories intact after all. That technique, I would really like you to teach it to me.” (Root) “It is unnecessary for you who can live by without reincarnating, right? And so?” (Grount) “And so, what?” (Root)

“That hyuman, just how did he defeat a monster that had devoured the power of 4 superior dragons? You cooperated as well, right?” (Grount) “Hm, it was a straight battle of power. Regarding me, it was like, I gave the last hit? Thanks to that, I ended up in a variety of circumstances with him though. Well, he is a boy that is fun to get involved with, so I don’t really mind.” (Root) The eyes of Grount are wide open once again.

Her mouth was also wide open as if her jaw had dislocated.

Tomoe who was silent, was covering her mouth and trying to hold down her laughter.

“... Root, just how long are you going to keep joking around? From what point should I begin to seriously listen?” (Grount) “How rude. The only joke I made was the message I gave to Makoto-kun, but everything else I spoke seriously.” (Root) “Message?”

“Yeah. I told him that at the Empire there’s my Oba-san dragon by the name of Grount, so please bring the egg of Lancer to her.” (Root) “So it really was your doiiiing!!!” (Grount)

With a speed akin to instant movement, Grount puts one leg on the table and grabs the collar of Root, lifts it, and shakes it violently back and forth.

It is the most movement they have had today.

“Wai-, ugh, calm...down!!” (Root)

“Like hell I can be calm!! This is the first time I have tasted such a despairing experience you know?! My blaze couldn’t even make his clothes flutter; when my spell hit him, it wouldn’t reach and would be

cancelled! My nails and fangs as well, no matter how many times I hit him, he shook his head apologetically!!” (Grount) “Acha~. That magic armor has that much strength huh. Moreover, it seems to have stabilized quite a bit. How scary.” (Root) “It is not on the level of scary! At the end, my nails were cracked and hurt a lot you know?! See here!!” (Grount) While hanging Root with one hand, Grount stretches her right hand before Root’s eyes.

Her fingers were beautiful, but just like she said, her nails were grandly cracked and were in a hurting state that people would frown when looking at it.

“You didn’t have them healed?” (Tomoe)

Tomoe asks Grount as she sips her tea.

“He did ask me if I wanted it healed. But... there’s no way I would just go: ‘Okay, please’, right?! Spreading blood lust, throwing out attacks, and when I was tired, I got artlessly grabbed and thrown away; he said that right after!!! It took me my whole to say: ‘Don’t look down on me, what’s your business?’, you know?!” (Grount) “I see. For a crushed dragon like you, Waka was unable to say anymore huh.” (Tomoe) “I also have my pride as a superior dragon... Waka?” (Grount)

Grount who has been responding to Tomoe without facing her, at this moment for the first time, she turned her face towards the back where Tomoe is.

“Yeah, I told you that I was at the Empire, right? Along with my master.” (Tomoe) “Yeah.” (Grount)

“My master’s name is Raidou-ja.” (Tomoe)

The air in the area froze.

The one who was creating a noisy atmosphere was Grount, and the person herself had frozen in place.

“... What did you say?” (Grount)

“Didn’t I say it already? That I had made a ruling pact with a hyuman.

That person was Raidou, or Makoto-sama to put it in another way. My master-ja.” (Tomoe) “A ruling...pact. You did say it before... EEEEHH?! You made a ruling pact... with a HYUMAN?!” (Grount) “Just how long do you take to get it? Are you aiming to become an actress or something?” (Tomoe) “Eh, but Tomoe, a superior dragon and a hyuman... ruling; and that’s with that boy, Raidou?” (Grount) “That’s right-ja. Oh, don’t put down Root. Keep him like that-ja.” (Tomoe) Tomoe stops Grount who had lost the strength in her arm that was holding Root because of her absentminded state.

“Eh, why are you saying something like that, Tomoe? Wasn’t the talk heading to drinking all together after a long awaited reunion between superior dragons? If I remember correctly, you have a delicious Sake that you made.” (Root) Root felt an air of turbulence stroking his cheek.

He timidly confirms with Tomoe.

“Of course, there’s no lie in that. But you see...” (Tomoe)

Tomoe faces Root who was across Grount, and continues speaking with eyes holding a sharp light different from any before.

“Before the drinking bout, I have something I want to ask. Well, I have already gotten a confession though. How dare you set up Waka to say the taboo word at Grount. Moreover, in a misunderstanding where he would most likely say it repeatedly.” (Tomoe) “N-No well, that’s you see... I was 100% sure that Makoto-kun wouldn’t go for the kill, and I also knew that Grount wouldn’t be able to kill him, so... see? When thinking about it properly, don’t you think that the best way to understand Makoto-kun is after exchanging fists with him?” (Root) “... Because of that, I suffered quite a wound in my heart though?” (Grount) “G-Grount, let’s calm down. lvs2 isn’t something a superior dragon should do. Don’t you think so?” (Root) “Be at ease, Grount. At the drinking bout later, I will have you heal that wound with the best Sake. That’s why right now... you understand-ja na?” (Tomoe) Root and Tomoe face Grount and speak to her.

“Understood. Right now your name is Tomoe, right? We have to talk for a bit to this idiot with bad taste, isn’t it?” (Grount) “Umu. Of course, a talk

with fists, that is.” (Tomoe)

“Yes, with fists. In good time. After this finishes, I will get treatment for my nails.” (Grount) “Tomoe, from the beginning you came here with those intentions, weren’t you?!” (Root) “You have went a bit out of boundaries, Root. It is still long till night. It is a nice time to take a break!!” (Tomoe) “I will have you learn how scared I was!!” (Grount)

“Wai-?! Today I seriously have work piled u-- agaaaaaa” (Root)

That night, the two dragon princesses were moistening their throats to their heart’s content with the japanese Sake.

Excluding one of them who had his wounds sting.

Chapter 184: Welcoming and Audience

Parade.

There really was one.

With an open carriage that was ornamented in a conspicuous way to the level of a portable shrine in festivals, it carried us from the gate to the castle.

Since coming to this world, this has been the most embarrassment I've had.

It made me think that there's no other day I wanted to bring my mask as much it did today.

At the front, Io slowly advanced on his black horse-like ride; at our side, there's Rona.

Well these guys are in their own country, and their position is that of a demon general, so they are probably used to this kind of treatment.

But I was a normal citizen in Japan, and in this world I am a merchant, so being immediately able to cope with this type of event is impossible.

I was somehow able to return my stiffened face to normal, but I was unable to reach an understanding or free myself from obstructive thoughts.

What surprised me was Mio and Shiki.

Mio had an unconcerned face as if nothing's happening, and Shiki was smilingly responding to the welcoming words thrown at him and was waving his hand.

Incredible.

These two are honestly impressive.

Also, I don't know if this is the sense of worth for the demon race, or that's just their valuation of humans, but it felt fresh.

As soon as the parade began, obviously, the gaze of the blue crowd that

was lined up at both sides of the wide street were gathered at us.

I had shrunk the magic armor to a point that can't be seen, and my magic power itself is in a state where other people would find it hard to notice.

Because of that, I who was the main guest, was looked at with puzzled eyes; at Mio with curiosity; and at Shiki, they simply let out their breath.

From three of us, the one who was showing the most power to the outside was Shiki.

Not much later, eyes of respect were also directed at Mio.

Glittering eyes were directed at her.

Not long after, cheers were also poured at me.

Even though I am barefaced.

For the demon race, the appearance is secondary. I understood that here they evaluate people by their power.

Because they are demons, they have blue skin and have horns on their head, but just as expected from the people created by the Goddess, they all have nice looking features.

I don't know what kind of introduction they did to us, but being welcomed by a group of beauties feels uncomfortable.

"Fufufu, they really did it. Last night's reception in the village was truly exaggerated as well, but I didn't expect that they would go through so much effort." (Shiki) We enter a towering castle, and were led into a spacious room.

Shiki, this is not something to laugh about.

Here I am, unable to stop sighing because of the mental fatigue.

If I let my guard down, a deep sigh would leak out from the depths of my stomach.

Even if Mio confirmed me that there's no tapping and spying set up in this room, my rapid fire sighs were not stopping.

How deplorable.

“There were a number of stores that seemed delicious-looking. I will check them out later.” (Mio) Now that she mentions it, the kebab-looking one looked good.

Wait, that’s not it.

Is it okay to go outside? That’s the first thing that should be answered, Mio.

Fuh...

“Outside huh. I will ask later and see if we can step out, Mio. And so, as expected, the reception at last night’s village was also a plan from them, Shiki?” (Makoto) I ask for confirmation of Shiki.

It is certainly true that for a town that has been enduring blizzard and existing, they gave us a warm welcome.

I thought that it might be because people related to the Demon Lord and the Demon Generals had come, but is there some sort of underlying reason?

The most I thought was: ‘The Demon Lord is also giving orders to the towns’.

“Of course. ‘Even in unexpected places, the demon race is a monolith, and the Demon Lord also has good reputation’, is most likely what they were trying to appeal. The parade is also a part of it. They probably thought that a welcoming was obvious for guests of the Demon Lord, and they must have wanted to show the trust they have for their own lord.” (Shiki) “Are you trying to say that this appeal is another word for political pressure?” (Makoto) “No. The Demon Lord is without doubt doing a good government for the demons-no- the demi-humans as a whole. This capital is without doubt the place with most demons, but the sight of demi-humans wasn’t rare, right? In the citizens that were welcoming us, they were naturally mixed in.” (Shiki) “Ah, that’s true. In that case, there’s no need to make an appeal. We would be able to tell just by looking around normally.” (Makoto) “...They wanted us to understand the demon race in

the short time of our stay, is most likely what they were trying to achieve. If it were people that only had good points... it would have been easier though.” (Shiki) “Eh, is there anything troublesome coming?” (Makoto)

Seeing the words of Shiki stalling, I felt a sense of foreboding.

“No. It seems like for the demon race side, they are properly trying to grasp Waka-sama. At this rate, they will probably not try a scheme of separating us. Of course, I will be keeping an eye and providing support.” (Shiki) “Yeah, do your best Shiki. I will leave that part to you.” (Mio)

... Mio.

If you are leaving that to him, just what do you intend to do.

“I will leave the protection of Waka-sama and recklessness display to Mio-dono. I am counting on you. If I don’t have to fling my power as Larva, they will probably slightly understand the depths of our power after all.” (Shiki) “... You two, I am counting on you, okay?” (Makoto)

It seems like Mio does have intentions to work.

For now I am relieved.

Ah, I kinda feel nervous now.

At Rotsgard, when I met with the high-standing people of countries, it was an emergency situation, so I remember that I wasn’t that nervous.

Being welcomed in this kind of way and even putting on a parade, well, it was to be expected.

At the Empire, before I could get nervous, there were a lot of events going on, and Tomoki served as a good stress relieve. Well, he made it possible for me to use him that way.

Knock

Uo, it’s here.

“Excuse my intrusion. The representative of Kuzunoha Company, Raidou Misumi-sama. The preparations for the audience have been finished.”

A serene voice.

The lively words increased my nervousness.

Deep breath~, deep breath~.

“Ah, yes! I will go soon!” (Makoto)

Shiki opened the door and leaves to the corridor.

Two armed soldiers were there and two demons with a nice personal appearance.

There are 4 people coming to guide me?

No, but the two others are not armed. Did civil officials come as well?

They must have noticed me staring unconsciously, the two lowered their head.

But they don't say anything.

The two had a difference in height like that of Akua and Eris.

The tall one is a man with indigo blue short hair and a fine goat-like horn.

In terms of age, he is obviously older than me, but I think he is young. Maybe in his mid-twenties?

His demeanor is soft and has a gentle smile on his face.

The other one is a small woman.

Or more like, little girl.

Long straight blonde hair, and a still small horn.

Her mouth looks like it is smiling, but her eyes were showing a light as if inspecting me.

... At least it is better than the scheming eyes of Eris.

Hmph, well, there should be an explanation later.

Even though they have come to tell me that the audience preparations have been done, it would be rude to keep talking here. As Shiki said, it

seems like the demon race won't be coming with any foul plays, so let's just be obedient.

This may be common etiquette of the demon race.

"Then we will be guiding you."

"Please do." (Makoto)

One of the armed soldiers measured the timing and talks to me.

I nod.

Right now it is without doubt noon, and yet, we are walking the corridor with lit lights.

It is always night here after all.

A capital of everlasting night does sound kinda cool.

The people that were walking the opposite direction, no matter their appearance, they all shifted to the sides and lowered their heads as they saw us off.

Yeah, it does feel itchy.

But that time didn't continue for long.

We arrived at a big door that felt like a gate.

There were two robust soldiers... no, maybe knights, with a clear difference in hair color that were standing at both sides of the door.

The two that were silently walking behind until now went along with the two soldiers and approached the door. They seem to be talking about something.

As expected, the two with good personal appearance are probably from a higher standing.

While I was thinking that, the big door opens.

I was bask by a faint light, so maybe it has some sort of magic imbued.

From the door that opened without making a sound, I could see a red carpet spread out.

Oh, it truly looks like an audience room.

Being urged to go in, I thought this before going into the room.

Maybe there's some sort of etiquette here.

"Uhm, can you please tell me if there's some sort of custom I am required to do?" (Makoto) I approach the smiling man that has an easy to talk atmosphere, and quietly ask him.

"It is okay to just act as you normally do. It is a given that you don't know the etiquette of the demon race. If Raidou-sama holds respect for our Lord, then it is enough if you just show it in your own way."

"I-I see. Understood." (Makoto)

'If you don't know, it is fine even if you are lacking in manners', is what he is trying to say, right?

Okay.

Let's go.

Resolving myself, I face forward.

The man that gave me an explanation and the girl that came along with him were standing at both sides of the red carpet that I advanced in.

Are they people that will be participating in the audience?

If there's people like that, it would make me feel better.

I continue straight through the red carpet.

Mio and Shiki were following a few steps behind.

After the red carpet, there's a stairway, and after that there's the throne.

I can see that there's someone there.

... Or more like, standing.

It is not sitting on the throne?

No no no, not only that, it is walking down the stairs?!

Eh?!

Is the Lord of the demon race supposed to do something like that?

No good, don't fall in chaos.

This might be a plan from them as well.

I was about to walk in quick steps, but I was somehow able to maintain my speed.

If I continue on, someone will probably notify me of where is the point I should stop.

I walk in a calm pace.

I'm totally at my wits end inside my head though.

The person that's probably the Demon Lord doesn't stop its feet and continues going down the stairs.

The distance steadily shortens.

This is unexpected, really unexpected.

Being bewildered in this occasion can't be helped.

I should at least try not to stutter. Yeah, let's do that.

Subordinates, stop that person!

Your Lord and a stranger merchant will end up talking at close range, you know?

Isn't that bad?

But my internal screams ended unanswered.

My legs stop.

Because I can't advance further.

Right in front of me, there's the Demon Lord.

Wearing a luxurious cloak that covered all sides of its body.

The height of my gaze would be staring right at his chest, so the first impression that came out was his cloak.

Looking up at the Lord of the demon race who is standing straight, I look

at his face closely.

And so, he was younger than what I thought.

It is an appearance that would make me question if he has already turned 40.

As a man, he looks like the age where he has passed the difficult period.

His short blonde tortoise shell cut hair was lifted up in order to avoid having it on his horn. At around the top of his ears, there's two thick curved horns like those of a goat.

Our eyes met and we both look at each other.

He is the Lord. I could tell that in one glance.

What an incredible presence.

If we fight, I will probably win.

But, how to say it. Right, he is a man that I can't beat at anything else aside from that, is what I thought.

It is not a sharpness that shoots through, but eyes that seem to envelop you.

His face had turned into a wide smile.

But that wasn't a sensation of closeness, it was something that made him feel even bigger. I felt overawed by it.

Noticing my legs that were about to step back, I stop them.

Then, I noticed. The hand stretched out from the Demon Lord.

I thought that he was asking for a handshake, so I reflexively put out my right hand, and just as expected, he grabbed it.

With relatively high strength.

"I'm glad you have come. Welcome to the capital of the demon race, Raidou-dono. This one is the Lord of the demons, in the outside, the people call this one, Demon Lord. My name is long and troublesome, so it is fine for Raidou-dono to just remember this one as Zef." (Zef) With a

clear voice, the Demon Lord speaks.

“Zef-sama. I am Raidou Misumi. A merchant running a business called Kuzunoha Company.” (Makoto) Eh, I didn’t say anything strange, right?

I should be fine, right?

“Umu, this one is truly sorry for having you walk through such a tough route. We are in the middle of a war, so please forgive us. In exchange, at the time you are here, this one promises you that you will not face any discomfort. Along with the rudeness of this one’s subordinates, I will have them atone for it plenty.” (Zef) “I thank you for the grateful words. Just that, the case with the Demon Generals was a misfortune in war and being at cross purposes. Please don’t think about atonement.” (Makoto) “A misfortune brought in war huh. You will think of it that way. This one is truly grateful. But about the entertainment, it is something obvious to do for our guests. This one wants you to enjoy yourself. And so, are those two there Raidou-dono’s subordinates? People from your company?” (Zef) “Ah, sorry! The man is called Shiki, and the woman is Mio. The both of them are followers that are helping me out a lot.” (Makoto) With my words, Mio and Shiki lift their lowered heads and do a bow.

“My name’s Shiki. One of the Kuzunoha Company members that has come together with master.” (Shiki) “Same, Mio-desu.” (Mio)

“Hoh~. The two of you seem to be really strong. This one is jealous of Raidou-dono. No, saying something like being jealous would be rude huh. Raidou-dono must possess quite the power as well. Then it is natural that these two would serve under you. It was this one’s mistake, please do forgive this one.” (Zef) “I am always being helped out by them anyways.” (Makoto)

“My apologies. But it is regrettable that this one can’t even measure your strength. If you are hiding it, that means you have enough ability to even hide it from this one. It seems that inviting Kuzunoha Company was fortuitous for us demon race.” (Zef) “Those words are wasted on me.” (Makoto)

“Fufufu. An audience that would stiffen one’s shoulders would be tiring

for Raidou-dono, right? Then let's change locations and do some leisure talk." (Zef) ?!!!

It's still not over?!

"Understood. Do you mind having my followers accompanying us as well?"

"Of course this one doesn't. Your companions can also come. Right, this one is thinking about having a few of my relatives, children of mine, accompany us. It is a good chance for them to have a conversation with a hyuman, moreover, a merchant at that. Is it okay?" (Zef) "Children huh. I don't mind." (Makoto)

The children of the Demon Lord. Then does that mean the prince and princess?

Now that I think about it, the princess Lily from Gritonia, prince Yoshua from Limia; I have quite a good amount of prince and princess' as acquaintances.

It makes me actually feel that me and my company are strangely famous.

"Then let's go." (Zef)

"... Zef-sama will guide us himself?!" (Makoto)

My tone reflexively comes out strong.

"Don't worry, it is just around the corner. Ah, you haven't placed anything in your stomach since coming to the capital, right? About that, this one will have it prepared." (Zef) Zef-san glances at Mio?

He looked at Mio.

It is not like she is dissatisfied because of hunger.

It even seems like she is slightly happy to hear that we will be eating something.

Waving his cloak, Zef-san walks towards the door we had entered from.

I follow the Lord.

It would obviously be bad to be left behind.

With a speed that doesn't turn into running, I hurriedly follow after him.



“Now then, the Kuzunoha Company is an interesting bunch. What do you guys think?”

A room that's used for meetings.

At the big table there's plates, and light meals that can be taken with the hand were being brought to it.

Beginning with the Demon Lord, the demons that were in that place also had food still on their plates, but the three plates at the empty seats were still on the table and its contents had been cleanly finished.

This is after the conversation with Raidou, Mio and Shiki had finished.

The situation in the room was proof of this.

“...A beast that devours meat, no matter how docile it tries to be, there won't be any assurance that it won't attack. That's the impression I had of Kuzunoha Company.”

The first one to respond to the Demon Lord's words was one of the demons that went to receive Raidou; the tall man.

“Roshe huh. Fumu, then if it's you, how would you associate with Raidou and the Kuzunoha Company?” (Zef) “From their words, obtaining true cooperation from them is impossible. But there's no need to go out of our way to awaken the sleeping danger. We will have a connection when necessary, and in the future, I think that it would be appropriate to act in a way that we don't end up facing front to front with them. Fortunately, it seemed like they didn't have any intentions of providing man power to the humans.” (Roshe) “So cooperation will be impossible huh. It is certainly true that it will be difficult. They clearly stated that they won't take any powers as allies. Even if any of the sides does an action that benefits the other, it will be an action that directly relates to their benefit and not with the intentions of being hostile with anyone.” (Zef) Roshe nods at the

words of the Lord.

“Those words of Raidou sounded very dangerous to me. In this war that has our fate at stake, they will only participate in the war with their benefit at foremost. That’s how it sounded to me.” (Rushia) “Rushia, are you saying that the Kuzunoha Company will become a third power?”

The next one to speak was a woman.

A different female from the girl that had come to receive Raidou. A woman with a calm atmosphere around her.

Looking straight at the Demon Lord, the light in her eyes didn’t waver.

From this group, she is the only one wearing armor even if it’s lightweight, which made her stand out.

“... Right now I wouldn’t go so far as to say that. But it is like having a sword hanging on our heads. An unrestful sensation.” (Rushia) “... The words of Raidou: ‘If there’s hostility, we will deliver retribution’, is the part that you are worried about?” (Zef) “Yes. Raidou said that if anything is tried against his friends, he wouldn’t forgive it. In a clear manner.”

(Rushia) “This one thinks that those words of his had another way of taking it. Most likely its foundation is that he won’t be showing hostility to anyone himself; is what he intended to mean when saying it.” (Zef) “But just like what your Majesty has said, Raidou made an allusion that there’s a chance they might do something that could antagonize us. Moreover, adding the intention of having us overlook it.” (Rushia) “Fumu, those words, this one doesn’t think they were said with the intentions that you have stated, Rushia. There’s certainly a few words from Raidou that gave out a doubtful feeling though.” (Zef) “As long as Raidou and the Kuzunoha Company doesn’t properly state their position, without stating if they are black or white, I am against being intimate with them.”

(Rushia) “This one properly understands your view now. Sem, how do you view it?” (Zef) Listening to the last words of Rushia, the Demon Lord shifts the conversation to the man that was silently listening to the conversation.

A demon with long silver hair tied in a bundle and wearing glasses.

It is also the demon that secretly felt closeness to Raidou because he felt like they were glass comrades.

Although the Raidou in question had already taken them off since the matter at the wasteland though.

Opening his narrow eyes, the man called Sem speaks.

“I have a similar opinion to big brother, but I thought that it would be better to have a deeper connection with them.” (Sem) “Hoh~. That’s quite different from Rushia.” (Zef)

Sem looks at Rushia.

She didn’t show an displeased expression after hearing the opinion of him which is practically the complete opposite of hers. She just closed her eyes and silently took her seat.

“We have different standings by nature. If I was in the same position as Rushia who thinks of the national defense as foremost, I would have had the same opinion as her.” (Sem) “You who are in the position of diplomacy, has a different opinion, right? Let’s hear it.” (Zef) “Yes. Sadly, Raidou-dono didn’t answer much of the questions I asked and it was mostly Shiki-dono who did, but I think this is the opinion of the Kuzunoha Company. First of all, they possess a transportation ability that surpasses us by lengths and bounds.” (Sem) “... What’s your basis?” (Zef)

“They have experienced the harsh travelling in the demon race territory. But well, even in the demon race territory it was one of the most harshest of the places though. Our territory has increased quite a bit after all.” (Sem) “Sem, that’s not answering anything.” (Zef)

“Oh, I am sorry. I unconsciously lengthened it. It was my bad habit. In other words, they have experienced that level of travelling, and yet, if for example I asked something like: ‘We need these type of things prepared, would you be able to bring them?’ Shiki-dono would normally nod, and its price was truly reasonable. It was a price that was purely placed to obtain profit from the cost of production.” (Sem) “...Continue.” (Zef)

“Yes. In other words, it didn’t take much into consideration the expenses

that would come from travelling in these lands. The warranty for the danger should make the price even higher or it would be strange. Moreover, they were talking as if they didn't have any problems with bringing fruits, vegetables and meat. This is something that Raidou-dono said though." (Sem) "That's why you think the Kuzunoha Company has some sort of method to certainly deliver the goods, moreover, in a way that doesn't entail any danger?" (Zef) "That's how it can be taken. If there's a company that's able to transport the goods from faraway without any damage in the goods, their worth would be unmeasurable. There would be no other foreign trade partner as beneficial as this. The problem would be if our market would appeal to their interest though. I don't think it will be that much of a problem since he is a human and the specialties of the demon race territory have a rare value. Of course, thinking of the possibility that those goods might be sold to other humans, I think it would be best to not trade anything that's related to our classified information." (Sem) "Then your opinion is that: 'As a partner that can help enrich the demon race, it would be best to hold a connection with them'?" (Zef) "Yes. We are beginning to realize a wealthy country for us demons and the demi-humans that have decided to coexist with us. But the territory that has become bigger now, still has slow movement in goods. If we create a good business connection with the Kuzunoha Company, it would become a big help to the goods distribution in our territory. If put in an example, it would be like having blood flowing better through the veins." (Sem) "So you are saying that the current demon race doesn't have its blood flowing all the way huh." (Zef) The words of the Demon Lord had a tone of self-blame.

"Fast development will always create bents in places. It is only because I am lacking in skills. Normally, we shouldn't be relying on external sources, but even so, I have judged that our current demon race requires their existence." (Sem) This is what Sem declares.

For Sem, the Kuzunoha Company might have looked like the hand of salvation.

"Understood. This one will use it as reference. Now then, the remaining

one is Sari huh. This one thought that you would be the first one to state your opinion though. The first one that wished to come along was you after all.” (Zef) “...”

“Seeing the Kuzunoha Company and speaking with them; this one wants you to tell me what you felt about it.” (Zef) “...Yes” (Sari)

The last one the Lord shifted the conversation to was a little girl.

One of the people that came to escort Raidou.

She had a face as if meditating something in a deep, really deep manner.

Doing a short reply, Sari moves aside the hand that was at her mouth and lifts up her head.

“Those people... no, more accurately speaking, Raidou is incredibly dangerous.” (Sari) “... Fumu.” (Zef)

The same direction as Rushia’s opinion huh, is what the Demon Lord thought.

For someone that had interest in them, she had stopped to a quite normal viewpoint, is also the unexpected feeling he had of Sari.

She continues.

“My ally by nature is the analysis of information, but after being face to face with these people, I will be speaking with a bit of instinct mixed in as well.” (Sari) “This one doesn’t mind. What did you feel?” (Zef)

“Trackless power. Moreover, at an overwhelming extent.” (Sari)

Hearing the abstract words of Sari, all the people present narrow their eyes.

“You are saying quite the abstract words there. That’s rare, Sari.” (Zef) “I am sorry, your Majesty. But if I am to put it together, that’s the result that comes out. As an existence of power, the Kuzunoha Company is certainly not an existence we can ignore. In that aspect, I am of the same opinion as Ani-sama and the others.” (Sari) <Ani=Older brother> Roshe, Sem, Rushia; the three of them nod at the words of Sari.

“Just like in the report of Rona, they are appealing. For us, they are incredibly appealing, moreover, strong. Conversely, that is also incredibly dangerous and an existence that can jeopardize the demon race. What I mean is that, uhm, I can’t properly bring it out in words. For all that power they have, they are way too much of an unstable factor, is how I thought of it.” (Sari) “Unstable?” (Zef)

“If I am to force myself to put my personal opinion into words, then yeah, that’s how it is. Unstable, moreover, an unstable factor that we don’t know its limits of. Raidou said he won’t cooperate with anyone in the war, he won’t be taking sides. That is just like Rushia ane-sama said, having a sword hanging over our heads. But just as Sem ani-sama said, that power could be the wonder medicine that might solve many of the problems the demon race has.” (Sari) “Then wouldn’t it end up the same as Roshe’s opinion? Thinking of the risks while having a connection with them.” (Zef) “...I am concerned about what’s further beyond that.” (Sari)

“Beyond?” (Zef)

“I illustrated Raidou as a power that can’t be kept in check. In other words, the time when Raidou suddenly turns to face us.” (Sari) “Acting in a way to make sure it doesn’t happen, won’t work?” (Zef) “We don’t know how something that can’t be kept in check will move. If in the middle of our war with the humans, we end up instilling his rage in a moment we don’t know of, he would most likely not hesitate in baring his fangs towards the demon race. Let me ask you, your Majesty. Your Majesty, can we defeat Kuzunoha Company?” (Sari) The words of Sari make the air in the area colder.

Words that could be taken as rude.

But the Demon Lord, after a moment of silence, looks straight at Sari without signs of faltering in his voice.

“...Don’t know. But probably...” (Zef)

“Probably?” (Sari)

“We won’t win. The best we could do is most likely to put our efforts in not losing. After all, Io and Rona who are our prided demon generals,

couldn't be his opponents even when fighting at the same time. And in reality, Io was dealt with in his spare time, eliminating him from the battlefield. His close aides as well as his employees, they are surely not normal either." (Zef) "?!!"

"..."

Aside from Sari, the eyes of the other three opened wide at the words of the Demon Lord.

Sari took those words in silence.

"So you see them as a power that can't be kept in check huh. As a commentary describing Raidou, it might be the most appropriate. This one's opinion is that he is a sleeping dragon. It might be a poor plan to just try not waking it up huh." (Zef) "He needs a choker. Also, it can't be just any choker. There's the need for a choker with the seed called demon race which will double as an insurance as well." (Sari) "A choker even when we can't keep it in check?" (Zef)

"Yes. Fortunately, I don't think there's an existence that is guiding his will yet. At the very least, he is not a talent that we can let the humans have. This timing is truly fortunate. I think that there's worth in trying." (Sari) "So we will be making Raidou into our lap dog? It is an opinion quite different from the other three." (Zef) "No. We will do our best to lead him into not biting the demon race, is probably the best result. He will most likely not be tamed." (Sari) "Fu... hahahaha!! You have seen through Raidou to this extent and yet, you still say that? Well, they are still staying in the capital. In that case, there's no need be so pessimistic. It may not be a long stay by any means, but... there's still time." (Zef) "...Yes. Just that, looking at the information of him until now, Raidou didn't show strong any strong will to have a relation of cooperation or minded about his own standing. I don't know what happened in this short time, but if something did happen, I can't go without resenting that reason. If he were in a more normal state, it would have been easier to handle." (Sari) "That unyielding attitude was also unexpected for this one. Was he like that from the very beginning, or did he have a change of heart, there might have been someone who did something unnecessary. What a troublesome

thing they have done. Now then, let's finish this up. It was worthwhile to hear all your opinions without reserve. You can leave now." (Zef) The Demon Lord wraps up the conversation.

The four demons leave the room, and the Demon Lord Zef was the only one left in the room.

"...Fuh, they have become reliable. If the Kuzunoha Company didn't exist, this one wouldn't have minded retiring even now. As expected, it is all because of Raidou and the Kuzunoha Company huh. This one doesn't think the meeting point at Kaleneon's area was a coincidence. It seems there's still more surprises for us. It is truly good timing that we were able to make contact with him before he joined any of the heroes." (Zef) After words akin to a whisper, the happy expression of the Demon Lord made a complete change. From a Lord, he had turned into an individual called Zef.

"Raidou... how long has it been since this one has felt cold sweat. To have power that even this one can't measure. At the very least he is stronger than a spirit. Not only a hero, his power might be close to that of a God." (Zef) A line of sweat runs down his cheek.

Zef didn't move for a while in his room.

Chapter 185: The Lapis Lazuli Volcano

“And so, it is now free time. We have easily received permission to go outside so, what should we do?” (Makoto) Finishing the extremely tiring audience with the Demon Lord, we return to the room prepared for us and take a break.

I look at Mio and Shiki.

Well~ that was impressive.

It was truly the Demon Lord-sama.

The four children of his had a smiling atmosphere and were throwing me conversation topics, but I felt like they were looking at more than just my answers.

But it wasn't as if we were faced with a one-sided barrage of questions, they also readily answered our questions, so I managed to get the permission to walk outdoors without having any bodyguards or surveillance.

“For me, I was thinking about having a small talk with Rona.” (Shiki)
“With Rona? Ah, right. Rona is an old acquaintance of yours, right Shiki?” (Makoto) “Yeah, but well, it is not like I am going to warm up my old friendship though. It seems like she is being overly cautious of us you see. There's still time for the banquet, so I will be going to solve that ‘misunderstanding’. She most likely already knows about the contents of our audience from the Demon Lord himself, but if that's the case, it is better to act fast.” (Shiki) Misunderstanding?

Hm, did Rona do something to make him cautious?

I don't think she did anything special though.

Maybe it is just that she has the eyes of someone that might do something.

“... I see. Then you won't be leaving the city, right?” (Makoto) “Yes. That, I will do later.” (Shiki)

“And Mio?” (Makoto)

“I will immediately head to check the city. There were a number of places that looks interesting after all.” (Mio) The bouncy words of Mio.

I thought that she had an unconcerned expression at the parade, but she was casually checking the surroundings. That’s impressive.

It makes me remember the words used to calm the nervousness of actors: ‘Think of the audience as if they are potatoes’, or something like that.

To Mio, the gazes and cheers of all those demons and demi-humans were akin to potatoes.

...No, potatoes are food, so maybe she considers them even lower than that?

No matter which, it is a bold spirit I would like to learn from.

At our visit to the Empire, Mio was looking after Asora in place of Tomoe, but this time, she was stubborn about going together with us.

‘Tomoe went last time, so this time you are staying’, is the logic she was using.

‘Is she a child?’, is what I thought.

Since returning from the Empire, Tomoe has been in a good mood, and without a single objection to Mio’s words, she readily consented to house-sitting.

Well, she did say that she had something to do, so she probably didn’t have any intentions of accompanying us anyways.

For me, Shiki is actually the one that pains me to have him accompany me two times in a row.

But he is the one that I can be the most at ease with when coming with me, so I unconsciously end up relying on him.

If I had only left Shiki behind, I think that it would have been possible to continue the classes in Rotsgard without having to cancel it.

I will have to reflect on this.

“An eating trip huh. At night we will be having a banquet, so try not eating too much, okay? Also, I didn’t hear anything about their side putting out bodyguards, but even if someone is following you, try to refrain from doing anything unreasonable.” (Makoto) “Yes, I know. I will just give them a light tap, Waka-sama. But if you are worried, how about accompanying me?” (Mio) “Me? I want to go, but since I have the chance, I will be finishing the errand of Root first.” (Makoto) “Root’s... ah, the egg, was it?” (Mio)

Mio made a slight pondering gesture at the mention of Root, and it seems she remembered something, she clapped her hands together.

Yep, she is correct.

“Yeah, Crimson Red’s egg.” (Makoto)

“Right-desu wa. In that case, I will go together with you–” (Mio) “Ah, can’t do. It seems like it is close to a place that your past self has done something a long time ago. It wouldn’t be good if anything were to happen.” (Makoto) “My past self?” (Mio)

“Well, I will go quickly and finish. From what I heard in the audience, it is a place that only takes a few hours to reach.” (Makoto) “Indeed. They did say that it’s a few days to the north. Looking at it in the same way as the White Sand Sea, Waka-sama would be able to arrive in a few hours, and in the return, it would be enough to just use mist.” (Shiki) Shiki complements my words.

Maybe the demon side didn’t expect me to make a question about that place, they made a surprised face at my question.

If I mention the name of a place in the demon race territory, it would definitely be strange.

Root’s groundwork this time seems to be with the people that are directly related to the errand, and the demons weren’t really in the know of this.

Different from last time, there’s people who will take the guardian job,

so as long as I arrive there, the mission will be completed.

“Then there’s no helping it. It is regrettable, but I will be doing my best in obtaining new recipes-desu wa. Later, I will try searching for souvenirs to gift the residents of Asora.” (Mio) “That would be nice. Tell me about the nice stores later. About the things that might serve as souvenirs as well.” (Makoto) “Yes! I will do the eating tour.” (Mio)

“Well then, I am going.” (Makoto)

I open the window of the room and leave to the veranda.

The garden that can be seen below was emitting light making it look illusory, and it was really beautiful.

But I look moderately above.

At the pitch black sky.

“Have a safe trip. Come back soon.” (Shiki)

“Don’t catch a cold, okay?” (Mio)

While receiving the words of the two with my back, I jump from the veranda that was as big as a balcony.

I harden magic power in mid-air and use it as footholds to jump again.

Just like that, I soar up into the sky.

I leave the barrier that envelops the capital, and arrive at the outskirts where wind and snow rule over. Confirming the direction of my objective, I set up a marker at the distance.

I can’t see it with my eyes, but I can feel it.

With this, I won’t lose my way even in this blizzard.

In the room there’s already a mist gate to use for the return.

I just have to dispose of it when I return.

Now then, my objective is the snow field volcano.

It is without doubt a secluded region.

“Lapiz Lazuli Volcano huh. Will it be blue just like its name suggests? It

sounds like a beautiful place so it might be worth going to see.” (Makoto)
While holding slight expectations, I jumped into the blizzard.



If I didn’t have magic, I would have definitely gotten lost. I think this while I’m in this darkness filled snow storm.

The lights of the capital are already too far to be seen.

It must be as hellish of an environment as the White Desert.

There’s differences in hot and cold, and the hot one was filled with traps while this one is more about the fury of nature though.

But Crimson Red is supposed to be the dragon that reigns over fire, and yet, why is it in such a cold place?

No well, it is a volcano, so maybe the place itself won’t be cold though.

The outside is like this.

Thinking about Sofia’s abilities, Crimson Red was probably a dragon that soared the sky and breathed out fire.

But the place I am in doesn’t fit the image.

A dragon that shoots a heat ray like a laser. A dragon that could be considered the symbol of fantasy, moreover, a dragon that seemed to walk the path of the right.

Even if a laser is out of bounds, it is truly a Red Dragon.

I kinda want to see its figure when it was in all its splendor now.

I glance at the bag. Right now it is an egg.

Even if the growth of a dragon is quick, I will probably not be able to see it in the time I am alive.

That damn Sofia, she did something so wasteful.

“Oh, it is that huh. Going by the distance... it should be that, right? But it’s bright red though?” (Makoto) I thought I saw something dim pink at the distance.

After jumping a number of times more in the sky, I saw a bright red light that didn't fit this snow field.

It had the shape of a mountain, and when I got closer, I could see that it was shining like a ruby. A mountain remarkably high was there.

“With this, it feels more appropriate to call it Ruby Volcano though. Hmph?” (Makoto) I don't think it is an unnamed place.

It stands out, and it gives out a feeling that's not normal.

For now, I will land.

The ground at my feet is glittery and red.

If this is ruby, it would be amazing.

The billionaire kind of amazing.

If it's colored glass...no, even that would be amazing.

Yeah, the Lapis Lazuli Volcano(probably), its worth in seeing is plenty.

I should do some harvesting later.

This might be how it feels to go to the south beaches and get an urge of collecting seashells.

I haven't experienced that though.

It is a thinking that is slightly stemming from greed.

“If this is the place, someone should be living here.” (Makoto) I change [Sakai] to search and spread it to the whole mountain.

I had to shrink the magic armor slightly, so it can't be helped that some of my magic power leaks out. Because I still cannot fix the consumption to a point that utilizes the magic power to a 100%.

If I was able to do it, it would be able to stay infinitely after all.

It might serve as a goal.

It works for offensive and defensive, so even if this power is exposed, the demerits are low. If I had to put out a problem, it would be that if I have it deployed in visible mode, the people will probably not get close to me.

If I walked with it visible, I don't know how many times I would be told every day: 'You are being haunted'.

Being visible is a pain. I definitely don't want that.

"There it is. There's a cave over there huh. I see." (Makoto) Around halfway up the mountain, there's a cave that can be entered.

Inside it, there's the reaction of less than a hundred life signs.

They are demi-humans, or maybe mamonos.

Okay, let's go.

There doesn't seem to be any trap, and mamonos are not coming out.

Comparing this to what it has been until now, I would say this is actually on the safe side.

The only thing that happened was that I encountered a big Frost Dragon because of my carelessness, and I slapped it away. There wasn't anything that could be called a real fight, and I was able to arrive at the objective practically without obstructions.

But the encounter rate was actually relatively high.

If I dealt with all of them, the amount would be enough to serve as tracks to know exactly what route I took.

Even so, I felt like this place was safe.

The people living here are probably doing their regular patrols and securing safety.

"Oh, heh~" (Makoto)

I arrive at the cave.

Without much hesitation I enter, and the situation changed a bit.

I see.

My voice unconsciously leaked. I stop my feet and look at my surroundings.

"I see, Lapis Lazuli. For the inside to be deep blue..." (Makoto) The

outside is red, and inside is blue.

...Sadly, counting the environment, I wouldn't want to live in this place.

It may be beautiful, but I would limit it to touring.

“Ah, are they coming to receive me?” (Makoto)

After advancing for a while, I perceive a presence heading this way. I stop my feet.

It's one person.

It doesn't seem to be forming any magic, and doesn't seem to be taking any attack stance.

But it is really blue.

I remember hearing that blue light helps you get a quiet sleep, but with this, I might actually doubt its reliability.

It might have been nonsense.

I can't calm down.

“...Please tell me your name.”

The one that appeared looks at me and showed slight agitation.

But it spoke out and asked for a self-introduction.

Surprisingly, it was in common language.

“Name is Raidou. I accepted the request of Root, and have brought the egg of the superior dragon Crimson Red...-sama.” (Makoto) That was close.

I almost forgot to say -sama.

Even though I had resolved myself to be more careful after the incident with Grount, the person that had come out was a bit mysterious and made me almost slip.

Slime?

Well, that half-solid body that seemed to be made up of a blue jell-like substance, has the shape of a hyuman. It seems that it does have a

ruggedness resembling that of a face, but how to say it...

Ah, it is a woman.

There's a portion that seems to be her breast.

She is not wearing clothes, so I am speaking with a naked person.

And it seems like it is a woman.

To my regret, she is totally transparent and I don't feel any sexual attraction to her.

In an incredibly rude way, I can maintain a gentleman demeanor.

Being sexually attracted to this level of special would take a really special man too.

Even Tomoki might not...no, that guy might actually go for it without any discrimination.

No but...

Wait, what am I even thinking?

Anyways, I am sorry.

And while at it, if Root's information is correct, the past Mio seems to have cornered them to the brink of extinction; I am sorry for that as well.

I won't put it in words, but I will at least apologize.

"Is that Azuma-sama?"

Azuma?

I felt like my palpitation jumped up in an instant.

A really nostalgic name.

But for this slime-kin(temporary) to use that name, I don't think that she is using it while knowing the meaning for me.

I calm down my heart.

Ah, she is looking at the egg.

Could it be...

“...Excuse my rudeness but, is that Crimson Red-sama?”

As I thought, the name of the dragon.

So its name is Azuma.

It gives me a sense of familiarity.

Because it is the same name as a close friend of mine.

Not only is it not Japanese, reacting this much just because of the name is no good.

In the first place, even if the name is Azuma, I heard that the one in this world is male.

I see, so there's 4 superior dragons that are male, and 3 that are female huh.

...No wait, Root was originally a woman, so there are more female?

But right now he is male, right?

It might not be good for my mental health to think about this, but he spoke about having my child or whatever, so he should be able to turn into a woman as well. In that case...

Yeah, let's put a middle.

There's 3 male superior dragons, 3 female, and 1 other.

“Uhm, Raidou-sama?”

“Ah! Yes, this is Crimson Red-sama! Sorry, I was a bit spaced out.”

(Makoto) “You must be tired. It can't be helped. The journey to this place is rigorous no matter the route taken after all. Later I will bring you to a place where you can rest your body, but first the egg... is that okay?”

I open the bag in a way that the woman can see, and take out the egg.

The moment she saw it, an emotion of awe was visible in the slime-kin.

She can tell even if it's an egg huh.

As expected of the guardian.

“I have certainly confirmed it. Please forgive me for holding suspicions.

Go ahead, I will guide you to the dwelling of the Crimson Red-sama's guardians, Raidou-sama."

I'm glad.

It seems like this time will end without anything weird happening.

Ah, right.

This place that is red on the outside and blue on the inside; I will ask these people if I can take a bit of it.

Also, I should ask what Root has told them.

...I won't dance at the tune of that pervert's words after all.

I don't want to end in a pointless fight like the time with Grount.

At the end, Grount-san seemed to have grown timid after all...

Also...right. I have to make it back in time to the capital.

Being in this place feels like my sense of time will go weird.

It might be carefree of me, but I advance slowly.

Safely finishing the second egg's errand, I felt slight relief while enjoying the scenery of this secluded region.

Chapter 186: The Banquet's Night at the Dark Capital

I was almost brought into the feast of the Slime-kin and end up taking lodging.

It took more time than I thought.

A mysterious scenery also serves as a pitfall in this kind of sense.

A picturesque scenery should be enjoyed when one has the time.

I made it in time for the banquet, but I returned one hour later than planned.

“Then the egg of Crimson Red has been safely entrusted, right? Looks like it was a success.”

“No. I refused their feast, so I probably dampened their mood a bit.”
(Makoto) “If it’s only that, I don’t think they mind. In the first place, they wouldn’t think bad of the person that brought the one they worship just because of something like that.”

“...It would be good if that’s the case. I don’t think I will be associating with them deeply in the future, so there was a part of me that acted slightly halfheartedly thinking that it would most likely be the last time I see of them... you see.” (Makoto) “And in truth, having an individual settlement placed at these parts would be harsh even if we were to station the Forest Onis. It would be fine if we have teams formed, but if they are alone, it might be slightly dangerous. In that sense, our relationship with them will most likely not get any deeper.”

“We are already lacking in people, so I don’t plan on going so far. Even if I bring people to this capital...we would need Shiki or Tomoe to manage them every now and then, right? It would be bad to have the store on leave after all.” (Makoto) “But the other side... might request of it.”

“At that time, I will politely refuse.” (Makoto)

“That would be the best course. By the way, about the seating

precedences of today...”

I return to the demon race capital and change to a dwarf-made ceremonial dress in our room.

At first, they proposed a room for each of us, but it would be a pain when returning to Asora, so we told them that one room would be fine.

Also, the number of places where I can't wear my jacket has increased, so I relied on the words of a dwarf that told me to leave it to him, and had him create a number of clothes that can be used for parties and for etiquette.

Now that I think of it, I wonder why I didn't ask the Orcs for that.

Even though I should have known that armor-like effects would be added to the clothes the moment I asked a dwarf to make it.

As a result, it took quite a lot of time before it was finished.

Right now they are at the drawers.

It is kind of a waste.

“Seating precedence? Ah, the seat numbers huh. Uhm...” (Makoto)

I have Shiki show us where we will be sitting.

“We would be here.” (Shiki)

“Ah, hm? That's quite close to the Demon Lord. This could be taken as being welcomed, right?” (Makoto) Are they appealing again?

I did tell them that I won't be favoring the demons though.

“The segmentation of the welcoming is quite something. Without a doubt, we are being treated as state guests.” (Shiki) “S-State guests... Mere merchants like us, are on the level of importance to that of a country?” (Makoto) “As long as we don't delve into it, they will most likely not be saying it themselves, but it seems that way. As expected of the Demon Lord Zef. He must have felt something from Waka-sama.” (Shiki) “Is there going to be an incredible welcoming hell coming?” (Makoto)

My stomach is hurting already.

Even though the Rotsgard academy festival was already too much for me, and yet...

“Considering these seats, it might conversely be different. I think a chat with the Demon Lord will be the priority. Even if we enter, the Demon Generals should have taken their seats already.” (Shiki) ...

I have a sense of discomfort from the words of Shiki.

Leaving aside the Demon Generals, we will be sharing table with the Demon Lord’s children, right?

In that case, I feel like he should be saying more though.

“Shiki, the ones we will be sharing tables with will be the children of the Demon Lord, so they should be the prince-sama and princess-sama, right?” (Makoto) ... Even so, the Demon Generals and the royalty huh.

That will mentally fatigue me plenty.

Please learn that even if you have a refreshing smile, even if you smile gently, it will be pressuring depending on the person.

No, if they are doing it while knowing, I would just have to endure it though.

I can’t just tell them to please stop smiling after all.

“Oya, ah right. Waka-sama didn’t know, right.” (Shiki)

“What?” (Makoto)

“The demon race chooses their next Lord by their power. At the election there might be slight political power involved, but in the end, you won’t be able to become the Demon Lord unless you have the power to support it.” (Shiki) “I see.” (Makoto)

“That next generation Demon Lord is called the the child of the Demon Lord by the demon race.” (Shiki) “...Is that different from being a prince or princess?” (Makoto)

It would create factions between siblings, but I feel like I am only being told that they prioritize strength.

“Sorry, my words were insufficient. In other words, lineage doesn’t matter within promising candidates, and after gathering around a hundred, they give them education to become Lords, and among them, the next Demon Lord will be elected. The kids that are gathered are all ‘Children of the Demon Lord’.” (Shiki) ... Eh?

In other words...

“The ones there weren’t children that came directly from the Demon Lord?” (Makoto) “Most likely. It was already reduced to 4, so the next one will probably decide the future Demon Lord. Of course, the ones that couldn’t become Demon Lord will be given fitting posts and will take the role of leading the demon race together with the Demon Lord.” (Shiki) So the lineage doesn’t matter huh.

That’s impressive.

If you are promising, you will separate from your family in a young age and be treated as the child of the Demon Lord and be polished.

With that, promising talents would definitely be raised. They will be raised but...I also feel like questioning if it’s really necessary to go that far.

As long as you have power, as long as you have talent; they disregard the person’s circumstances, is what I felt in those words.

“The demon race really is completely into a power doctrine huh.” (Makoto) “Yeah, if they don’t do that, they might not have been able to survive, but it is certainly extreme.” (Shiki) “Even if it does produce results...it is not a way of thinking that I would like to bring to Asora.” (Makoto) “Other places will be other places; Asora will be Asora, Waka-sama.” (Shiki) “Right.” (Makoto)

I nod at the words of Shiki.

“Waka-sama! The guides have come-desu wa!” (Mio)

“Mio, welcome back. So the guides have come. You arrived barely in time. You took your time coming back.” (Makoto) “I came satisfied. It was all as planned-desu wa.” (Mio)

“... Yes yes. Then, let’s go.” (Makoto)

I feel like she is the type of person that would say: ‘There’s still one minute left till closing time!’.

... I was also that type as well.

How nostalgic.

“Yes.” (Mio)

Just like Mio -who was barely in time-said, the guides came soon after.

Mio is, without doubt, the person that is enjoying this trip the most.



I’m glad it is not a formal stand-up meal.

In terms of feeling, this is more like that of a wedding reception.

Of course, there’s no bridegroom or bride though.

At times there would be performance dances, announced shows, and buffet cuisine of incredible size being distributed.

The atmosphere is lively and the food is good.

Mio and Shiki are having fun, and I am also enjoying it plenty myself.

I am grateful for the consideration of the demons for letting us act without the need of being too reserved.

Just that, the gaze of the Demon Lord and the children were frequently directed to our side.

It is obvious for the host to worry about the state of their guests, so while brushing it as something that can’t be helped, I also felt slight nervousness because of it.

There were moments when the Demon Lord would bring conversations to me.

The other people that were probably nobles of the demon race or important people of the army; those people didn’t throw any such conversation. There’s quite the distance from them, but this point

honestly makes me happy.

The guess of Shiki seems to have been spot on.

And also...

“It seems his memories are gone, but how to say it, it seems there’s still the trauma clinging onto him.” (Makoto) “...Looks that way. I am slightly surprised.” (Shiki)

“How rude-desu wa. To foam the moment he sees someone.” (Mio)

“...That just means God-sama is not omnipotent huh, yeah.” (Makoto)

It is something that happened when we arrived at the banquet.

At the table where the Demon Generals were gathered, one of them suddenly stood up. Well, his upper half was that of a hyuman, but its lower half was that of a snake, so I’m not sure if to call it stand up... wait, that’s of no importance.

When I thought that he was staring at Mio while trembling fiercely, without saying anything, he began foaming and fell to his back.

The place turned silent for a moment.

We are the only ones who know the reason why.

He, the Demon General Reft, probably doesn’t know the reason himself. The fear inside his heart must have remained.

I thought it was only a sense of inferiority level of trauma, but it was actually at the level of PTSD.

I thought less of it because there were no memories remaining, but it seems it was still resounding in Reft-san’s heart.

And so, there’s only 3 at the Demon General seats now.

The person that’s wholeheartedly eating is someone I have not seen before, but it must be the last one of the Demon Generals.

The looks are like that of a hyuman.

Must be a demi-human, but the power itself doesn’t seem to be that

much.

Maybe that means there's more who are like Rona?

I don't want that.

"It's okay Mio-dono. Well prepared food is coming out in numbers, so we are being welcomed." (Shiki) "...I am happy about that, you know? But this and that are two different things, right? What part of me looks like a monster that makes people faint-desu ka?" (Mio) It seems Mio is discontent about the reaction of Reft.

If someone just heard the conversation, Mio's anger would be reasonable, but when thinking about what Mio did before, I even feel like using a slipper to hit her head as a tsukkomi.

'In the first place, you are the one that brought him here, weren't you?', is the kind of tsukkomi that would come out.

And so, I have no comments.

"Raidou-dono, what do you think about tonight's banquet? From what this one sees, it seems you are enjoying yourself." (Zef) "Yeah, thanks for the great seats. We are enjoying ourselves plenty." (Makoto) "And your followers, it seems they have something to say though."

"Don't mind it. Its just that she didn't like how Reft-dono reacted, that's all. Uhm, can I ask how he is now?" (Makoto) "Hm, the matter of Reft spoiled her mood huh. This one is truly sorry for that. It seems like right now he is seeing a nightmare of sorts. This one has received reports that he has been moaning in agony, but there's no danger to his life. It is not something to worry about." (Zef) Ah, what should I do.

Tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, I was thinking about telling them about Kaleneon while I am here, but there's the issue with Reft, so it was hard to say it.

Why did he have to be there and at that time in specific.

Because of today, it became even more difficult to say it.

" ... "

Uh, the Demon Lord seems to be looking at me.

A gentle smile as if he wanted to become my comrade, no, like a smile of someone plotting something.

I want to think that this is unjustified suspicion, but from experience, I can tell that there's something behind that smile.

"A-Ahahaha. I am relieved that it was not anything serious. Yeah."

(Makoto) "Right, Raidou-dono. After this, there's still a bit of time before the main dishes come out you see. If Raidou-dono is okay with it...can you accompany me for a bit?" (Zef) "Accompany you to where?" (Makoto)

"Over there, at the balcony. This one has drunk at a slightly fast pace you see, so this one was thinking of breathing in a bit of night breeze."
(Zef) Outside. The balcony huh.

Well, if it's only that.

I look at Shiki and he makes a small nod.

It seems it will be fine.

"Understood. I will gladly accompany you. My face is also a bit flushed after all." (Makoto) "Umu. The night view from the castle is beautiful you know. Well even if this one says so, it is practically night all the time in this capital though. Hahahaha!!" (Zef) Being urged by the Demon Lord, I stand up from my seat.

Oh, I am slightly staggering.

The alcoholic drinks of the demon race are quite potent.

Sweet alcohol and bitter alcohol is normally on the high level.

If I get used to the alcohol in this place, I might not be able to drink the whiskey of Rotsgard as an alcoholic drink.

I might feel it tastes like juice.

If I detox myself with magic, this level of intoxication would be gone in an instant, but since I finally got drunk in good fun, that would be a waste.

I try walking a few steps and follow after the Demon Lord that didn't

seem that drunk, and leave to the balcony.

There was no one, only the Demon Lord and I.

I could hear the door closing from my back, and the bustle of the banquet felt distant.

The wind that was neither strong nor weak was pleasant.

“How is the night view of the capital?” (Zef)

“Beautiful. It may be faint, but the lights of many colors somehow feel gentle.” (Makoto) “Gentle huh. It is an impression that wouldn’t be given by a demon. How fresh.” (Zef) The Demon Lord laughs amused.

From what I see, he doesn’t look that drunk.

It was a laugh that came after words that felt like they had many emotions placed within.

Sobering up might have been a pretext to bring me out.

“...This one would want you to...give me your opinion of the same night view, at the day of your departure.” (Zef) “...Okay.” (Makoto)

“Tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, Raidou-dono, this one wants you to look at the demon race and understand us. In the good and bad points.” (Zef) Does that mean he intends to show me the strong points as well as their weak points?

And at the end, tell him how I felt.

“I think it is splendid. I can feel the wisdom of the demons and their will to live.” (Makoto) “To tell you the truth, we weren’t trying to deceive you, but this isn’t a capital that functions as the metropolis.” (Zef) “Eh?” (Makoto)

“Accurately speaking, it has stopped being that way.” (Zef)

“Because of the war?” (Makoto)

“That’s right. Try thinking about it. The demon race has obtained vast territory, and yet, is there really a need to have a capital in a place as harsh as this one?” (Zef) ...

That's certainly true.

The current territory that the demon race possesses, the north of Elysion may be pretty vague, so the humans don't have a map of it, but at the very least, there's land that's better suited than this.

"Yes, that's true." (Makoto)

"Umu, in truth, right now we have been building up a city at the coastlands that will be functioning as the capital. We are making this the center of the country. This one is also normally there." (Zef) Then why did you have us walk inside the blizzard for several days?

If you had a more comfortable place to be in, shouldn't that be better?

...Is it because it is crazy far?

"Then why did you call us here?', is what you are thinking, right?" (Zef)

"Uh, yes. A bit." (Makoto)

Did it show in my face?

I am trying my best to not show my thoughts in my face though.

"It is because Raidou-dono is not using the correct method to conceal difficult emotions. If you don't want to be seen through, you shouldn't try erasing your emotions, but hide them. If you force yourself to erase them, it will only make it more obvious." (Zef) "I-I see." (Makoto)

"That time I asked you if you had fun as well. It would be okay to just leave a smile on your face. There's no need to force yourself to stay expressionless. Most of all, you should learn how to smile with your eyes. With that, you will be able to hide most things, and even earn others." (Zef) "Thank you very much for the advise." (Makoto)

Why am I suddenly being taught by the Demon Lord here?

But...to smile properly huh.

He says it as if it's easy, but it is actually difficult.

If I was told to do it without caring of the situation, there are times when I just can't.

I will have to be diligent.

“This is only the basics that can’t even be considered basics. There’s no need to think that you owe me anything. Ah, the talk was about the capital, right. This capital you see, is a place that has our history piled up. And for a long time, it has been the place that’s been the demon race’s everything. That’s why, this one thought that this is the place that this one wanted to show Raidou-dono no matter what. That’s the reason why this one had you walk such a harsh journey.” (Zef) “History...” (Makoto)

“That’s right, history. The many customs that have been born from this place are living within ourselves.” (Zef) “...Like for example, the matter with the children?” (Makoto)

I remember the words of Shiki and try asking.

Even if there’s no blood relation, that person will be treated as a Demon Lord candidate as long as that person is promising.

“...Who did you hear that from? That’s right. That method of choosing Lords was also born from this place, is what I have been told. It seems I have subordinates with loose lips. How troublesome.” (Zef) “No, it was one of my followers that coincidentally knew of it.” (Makoto) Even if there’s one, I have not heard of such thing from Shiki or Mio.

I should cover for the general subordinates of his.

“Hoh~ such extensive knowledge that person has. I see, a subordinate of yours that knows of the customs of the demon race. Well, that’s surprising.” (Zef) He doesn’t look surprised at all.

Maybe he already knows about Shiki.

The time when he was a Lich known by the name Larva, he was acquainted with Rona in some way, so the chances of her reporting about it is high.

“It was by coincidence.” (Makoto)

“Even if so. The number of customs this one was planning on showing you tomorrow, you might know them already. The amount of demons that

know the human society are low. The majority that know of it are from the army. In that sense, you people who are merchants, are deepening your knowledge. That's something worthy of respect. You truly have good subordinates." (Zef) "I am honored." (Makoto)

"...Within this everlasting darkness, the demon race has endured hardship. But that will continue forever with no end to it. At this rate, the demon race will perish. The moment we understood this, we gathered our strength and waited for the opportunity. And then, this one began war. As a Lord, this one doesn't regret it." (Zef) After a slight silence from my words of being honored, the Demon Lord that was looking at the distance, and without looking at me, he said words that were definitely directed at me.

That's how I felt.

"Even if it was the property of others, the demon race needed a rich land. If we didn't do that, we would have suffered in eternity, starve, and die. Raidou-dono, if you were to become the Lord of such a race, what would you have done? This may be hypothetical talk, but please let me hear it." (Zef) With a face that didn't show it was just mere hypothetical talk, the Demon Lord looks at me.

I think that this capital... really is a land that has big meaning to the demon race.

The Demon Lord probably recollected something and has asked me this.

Is it like the Kyoto and Tokyo for the Japanese?

The capital of history in essence.

No, it has only been a few years since the capital changed. It can't be compared to this.

It might look that way to me, but it is probably not that way.

"If it were me you say. If it were me, I would look for new frontiers before placing my hands on the belongings of someone else." (Makoto) "Look for land that's not yet seen huh. Then, in the case that it shows despairing results?" (Zef) Eh...

I went through the trouble of answering. Is it valid to return the question?

“Why would it be despairing?” (Makoto)

“Geographically speaking. There’s only inferior places left. There’s places that can’t be overcome because of the lack of craft.” (Zef) “Then I will have us research in the crafts and advance it.” (Makoto) “I see. Raidou-dono is saying that war should be avoided huh.” (Zef)

“War will definitely leave grudge. Thinking about the future, I don’t think this will turn into a plus.” (Makoto) “That’s of course true. But the demon race was way too cornered. The moment we judged that it was impossible to pioneer further north, we destroyed the demi-humans that were the previous residents of this place and obtained this land.” (Zef) ...

The place that you decided to steal...was this?!

Just what kind of wretched place were the demons living in before?

The Goddess as well, she is as evil as always.

I really continue to think that I should give her a good punch at that face of hers.

“I-I see.” (Makoto)

“Ah, and not leaving any grudge behind.” (Zef)

“Eh, but...” (Makoto)

“Slaughtered them all. If we take care of everyone, there will be no grudges left. It may be an inane plan, but at that time, that’s how we saved our race.” (Zef) That’s certainly true. If they don’t leave a single enemy behind, there won’t be grudges left.

They really are through.

“ ... ”

“The answer may be different depending on the person, but the foundation of the demon race is without doubt ruled by the principle of strength. If this one has to say it without any ornate words, it would be:

survival of the fittest. If possible, this one doesn't want to show you that part of us, but if we are to continue our relationship, the sooner the better. That's how this one thought. In the time you are here, you will witness the customs that are created by this principle, and its complications." (Zef) So he is telling me that they will face us seriously.

It is certainly true that showing one's dirty side is hard to do.

...It is scary to do.

"But it was slightly unexpected. From what this one has felt, Raidou-dono is someone that has quite the power. Hyumans are not a race that originally possess such high power. In other words, Raidou-dono has faced that much difficulties in life. And those kind of people, the people that have power will wish for more power and authority, that's how they end up thinking. Honestly speaking, this one didn't expect you to avoid war to that extent." (Zef) "Thinking of avoiding war, is that so weird?" (Makoto)

"For you merchants, it is also a chance to support your Lords. Of course, it is also a chance to gain huge profits, you know?" (Zef) "I...don't think of gaining huge profits from the war." (Makoto)

"...But when you were having a conversation with this one and the children, you said something that was akin to saying: 'I will be gaining profits from the war, but you can't complain about it', though?" (Zef) I didn't say anything that meant that.

Where did he pick it up in that way?

Ah, that huh.

The talk that even if I oppose them, it will not be because I am trying to be their enemies but because of interest, or something like that?

But that was not intended in that way.

"No, that's a misunderstanding. I am not thinking of participating in the war itself after all." (Makoto) "Rona was suffering a headache from that. Saying this is not what he said last time, that Raidou-dono might be intending to turn war into a business." (Zef) "Like I am saying..." (Makoto)

“It’s fine. It’s enough to hear those words of yours. Just like what Raidou-dono says, that’s Rona’s misunderstanding.

“We still have the time to understand each other. This one thinks that it is fine to slowly know of each other as we advance. Without hurrying.”

(Zef) “Thank you very much” (Makoto)

Stopping my words with his hand, the Demon Lord understood what I tried to say.

I’m glad.

It is truly a misunderstanding after all.

I am glad it didn’t end up in us being at cross purposes.

...

Right, if it’s now...

There’s no people around, only the Demon Lord and I.

On their side there’s only the Demon Lord; in my side it would be best to have Shiki and Mio by my side, but thinking about it, the other party is a Lord-sama. In reality, a situation that fits such criteria would be hard.

He seems to be an understandable person, and from that conversation just now, it seems he has his own thoughts about the demon race stealing land.

(Shiki, do you have time?) (Makoto)

I call Shiki with thought transmission.

(Waka-sama? It looks like you are speaking with the Demon Lord but, is there some sort of problem?) (Shiki) (No, its not that. You see, right now the atmosphere makes it possible to talk about Kaleneon. Is it okay to tell him?) (Makoto) (...Right. The chances of us speaking with the Demon Lord will most likely not be that many in the future. If it’s at this time, it would not turn in a debt. Just that, when you explain the situation, I think that it would be faster if you don’t mention the Anslan sisters being the reason, or about Asora’s matters.) (Shiki) (But then the only reason left would be my parents. Wouldn’t that be bad? Isn’t it better to touch about

the subject of Eva and Ruria's circumstances...) (Makoto) (If you speak about that, it could be taken as siding with the humans and reclaiming Kaleneon. Taking the side of the humans also means opposing the demon race. In terms of result, that action helps the heroes in a sense, so it is better for 'us all' to not increase our image of being the ally of humans.) (Shiki) (I-I see) (Makoto)

Now that I think about it, he does have a point.

It is only in terms of result, but our actions help the humans more than the demons.

I had no underlying intentions of doing that though.

Looking only at the results, if I tell them that I have reclaimed Kaleneon because humans asked me to...would be bad.

Yeah, it would be bad.

(In that case, it would be better to just tell them that it was the homeland of Waka-sama's parents, and that's why you took it back, which would let us earn more that way. For the demon race, it would be like giving them information that Waka-sama's parents were from Kaleneon. Who knows in what way they will take that information. For our side, it is not information that would trouble us.) (Shiki) (Understood. Then I will be doing that.) (Makoto)

(Don't mind it. Also, the Demon Generals and the other people are beginning to worry about your situation there. When you see the chance, wrap things up and return. Ah right, I almost forgot. There's also the matter of Reft. At the very least, tell him that Waka-sama didn't participate in the attack. Right...tell him that Waka-sama's subordinates went on a rampage for your sake, or something like that please. Mio-dono and I will deal with it if anything happens later.) (Shiki) (Thanks. Then after telling him this, I will be returning.) (Makoto)

I cut off the thought transmission.

The Demon Lord has not detected the thought transmission.

I have hidden it perfectly...I think.

The Demon Lord is looking at the night view with his hands on the railing.

“...Fuh~ No good. This one might have spoken a bit too much. Having our guest feeling the night breeze all this time, is something that should not be done. Should we go back, Raidou-dono? I thank you for accompanying me.” (Zef) “Uhm, Demon Lord-sama. There’s something I have to tell you. Can I have a bit of your time?” (Makoto) “This one invited you here. If there’s something Raidou-dono has to say, this one will definitely listen.” (Zef) “The demon race lost a territory recently, right?” (Makoto)

“...! Yeah. Close to the meeting point with Raidou-dono and the others, there was a country named Kaleneon in the past. That one.” (Zef) The expression of the Demon Lord showed the most surprise he has shown till now.

Okay, let’s say it.

“That’s something we did.” (Makoto)

“!!! Raidou-dono, do you understand what you are saying by that?” (Zef) Narrowing his eyes, the Demon Lord takes off all that amiable atmosphere and asks for confirmation.

It is alright. Everything that has to be spoken has already been arranged in my head.

Don’t be intimidated.

If it’s about Kaleneon, I definitely hold responsibility for it.

I won’t run away from it.

“Yes. Us -Kuzunoha Company-took Kaleneon from the hands of the demon race.” (Makoto) “...Let’s hear the reason. There’s obviously one, right? This one hopes that you won’t say this was for the sake of humans.” (Zef) “It was for my sake.” (Makoto)

“Raidou-dono’s sake?” (Zef)

“Yes. Kaleneon is...the homeland of my parents. In the past, my parents

tied their bond there. For me, Kaleneon is like my second homeland.”
(Makoto) “...”

“Well even if I say that, I wasn’t thinking about recovering the land of Kaleneon which was already right in the middle of demon race territory. Just that...” (Makoto) “Just that?” (Zef)

“My subordinates, thinking of me, took back the aforementioned land. The Kaleneon that they had given to me, I received it.” (Makoto) “Is that something your two subordinates, Mio and Shiki, did? Or were there other factors involved?” (Zef) Sharp eyes that tried to see through me.

There was no hostility.

But that was actually fearsome.

He is hiding his emotions just like he told me before.

With an emotionless face that reveals no emotion, he simply cross-examines me.

“I can’t say. No matter who was involved, the Kuzunoha Company moved, and I received the fruits of it. Since I received it, I hold the responsibility. I used power...to take away Kaleneon.” (Makoto) “...Kukuku. By the principle of power huh. It is certainly true that it is the principle of the demon race but...seriously, it is not a subject that should be said in this place, without doubt. There was a Demon General at that place and it was in the territory of the demon race, right in the middle of it. No matter how much power that can’t be overlooked you possess, is it something that can be recaptured by a company independently? Sorry but, this one is in chaos right now. But first, this one wants to ask you one thing. Why did you spare Reft?” (Zef) “I later learned that that person was a Demon General. He was injured, so I had him treated and returned him to the demon race territory. I don’t know the reason why his memories are a jumble though.” (Makoto) “Because he is a Demon General huh. If this one had to choose between Kaleneon and Reft, this one would choose Reft. In that sense, should this one be grateful?” (Zef) “No, that is...” (Makoto)

After leaking a chuckle, the Demon Lord makes a mysterious farsighted expression and a faint smile surfaced.

“But you got me. This one probably won’t be able to sleep tonight. Even though this one had drunk quite a bit and was in a good mood.” (Zef) “...”

“If the talk is over...this time for sure let’s return, Raidou-dono.” (Zef)
“Demon Lord-sama, this talk...” (Makoto)

“If you are going to say: ‘Don’t tell anyone’, that’s an impossible deal. This one doesn’t know if this one will be able to swallow all this. Also, this isn’t a talk that an individual can keep to himself. Well in the first place, it is strange to refer a Lord as an ‘individual’ though.” (Zef) He said it before me.

As I thought, it is impossible to ask him to keep it to himself huh.

But it would look bad to stay silent here so...

“No, this is something that I willingly spoke out because I understood the personality of Demon Lord-sama. That’s what I wanted to tell you.” (Makoto) “This one will take your evaluation to heart. Now then, let’s go back.” (Zef) “Thanks.” (Makoto)

The Demon Lord opens the door, and we return to the banquet.

A warm atmosphere envelops my body, and when I returned to my seat, I was welcomed by a huge amount of food.

Shiki who knew of the situation, had a face as if saying ‘good work’; Mio gave me her impressions of the food and gave me recommendations with a wide smile.

I-I was somehow able to say it.

Today there’s only eat and sleep left, so that’s a small blessing.

If tomorrow on is like this, my body might not be able to take it.

◆◆◆◆Makoto’s Dream◆◆◆◆

A dream.

I could tell from the atmosphere.

After being entertained by the banquet of the demon race, we returned to our room. Then, we locked the room and went to sleep in Asora.

Today I didn't feel like doing anything more.

The moment I returned to my own room, I quickly went down.

Last time it was my old self that seemed to have created a desert. And before that one...it was a dream where I almost killed Hibiki.

Hm, this is bad.

It feels like things are getting messed up.

Dreams like a strange kingdom and desert.

I remember a bit about the people that appeared in it, but the other details are getting foggy.

Dreams are not something that can be easily remembered so it can't be helped, but these chain of events feel like they are trying to tell me something and it bothers me.

This is already the third time after all.

When I wake up, I will ask Tomoe to archive them.

Anyways...the mist is quite thick.

To the level that it looks like smoke.

Where am I...I mean, the me in this dream.

When I thought of this...I found him.

“ ... ”

It isn't as old as last time.

Just that, it looks like I have an incredibly troubled expression.

I don't know if I have had these much emotion shown in my face before.

I was sitting at a bench.

Aside from that, I can't see anything else.

It's kinda ironic to say this in a dream but, this place doesn't feel real.

Also, it bothers me that there's no other person here aside from me.

“How long has it been since we have talked just the two of us, Waka.”

“...Tomoe.” (Makothree)

Eh?

I was surprised by the voice.

Before I noticed, the shadow of a person appeared at the bench that I was sitting on.

Ah, so this strange place was prepared by Tomoe.

Or more like, there haven't been any of my followers or the people of Asora in these dreams before.

“That kind of expression is...no, this isn't something that I should be saying.” (Tomoe) “You are the reason after all.” (Makothree)

“Yeah.” (Tomoe)

“Tomoe, I...” (Makothree)

He is using ‘ore’.

If I remember correctly, there was one dream where I used ‘ore’ as well.

Yeah, even though it is me -no-maybe it's because it is me huh.

The sense of disparity is incredible.

“Waka, please don't say further.” (Tomoe)

“I haven't said anything yet.” (Makothree)

“You were mostly going to apologize, right? It is unnecessary.” (Tomoe)

“...Even through the end, there's no rivalling you huh.” (Makothree)

...

The end?

“It is something I wished for. At the very least, I have no regrets. Please.” (Tomoe) “...”

“Being unable to reincarnate is something I was already prepared for when I made a pact with Waka. Also, there's Mio at that side as well. She may not be as fun as being with Waka, but being together with her doesn't bore me.” (Tomoe) “If I had...If I had been stronger, do you think this

wouldn't have happened?" (Makothree) "...No. Even if Waka had obtained the power to overwhelm that Goddess, there's no knowing if the result would have changed. No one would know." (Tomoe) "But at the very least, I wouldn't have done something as unsightly as exchanging the two heroes and Mio, right?" (Makothree) What's this?

Mio was here too.

And she is not here anymore. Is that what he is trying to say?

"But the Goddess might have come out faster. If that happened, not only Mio, Waka might have died at that moment as well." (Tomoe) "Even so!!" (Makothree)

"Everything has already happened. Waka, you have chosen your own path. We obeyed it. And so, we fought with a God and are now here. I said this before but, I...no, Mio as well, didn't regret anything. Something like: 'If we hadn't met Waka', has not crossed my mind one bit, you know." (Tomoe) "..."

"It was truly fun. A lot more fun than living eternally in a life without path. That's why Waka should also look forward, and walk your own path. All your worries, I will be taking them here. When you cross the river of styx, I will return them to you." (Tomoe) "My path huh." (Makothree)

"Yes. It is not like I can see through everything, so I don't have the right to say this all high-and-mighty though." (Tomoe) "Even when you are speaking to me in this fashion?" (Makothree)

In this fashion...

What is it?

For some reason, a strange and bad feeling is clinging onto me.

"...Yeah. If you want to hear, I will tell you but... just promise me, you will not drag us along anymore." (Tomoe) <She is telling him to stop burdening himself with their memories.> "You are so unfair, Tomoe. You who had no other worries aside from period dramas and Japanese customs, is having worries? Are you telling me this knowing that I want to hear it? Understood, I will walk forward. It is only a bit more after all. I

will look at the other side when I finish climbing.” (Makothree) The mouth of the hung down head had a smile surface.

The corners of the mouth were upwards, but it looked like a made-up smile.

I could somehow tell that he wasn't truly smiling.

“Then...since the time Waka had decided on his path, I steadily began to think this way. That maybe...If maybe there was another person aside from me and Mio who supports Waka...” (Tomoe) “Are you referring to a follower? But I don't have any other follower aside from you and Mio.” (Makothree) “Mio and I might have been a bit too possessive. We did receive equal affection, but we were negative about having a new follower.” (Tomoe) “...I can't imagine having a follower aside from you two. If I had to force myself to put out a candidate, maybe Zef. Another one could be Sand Wave? Root? Well, the candidates would be them.” (Makothree) “Zef huh. He might be a good one. Umu, if it were a man, we might not have minded much.” (Tomoe) “A third follower huh. That's quite the talk there.” (Makothree)

No, and Shiki?

Shiki... is not here?

“I don't mind if it's 3 or 4, but well, I had such a weak-willed thinking.” (Tomoe) “Even you think about 'maybe's' huh. I am slightly relieved to hear that.” (Makothree) “Well then, it is already time to say goodbye. I made this kind of setup just in case, but I am glad that even someone like me was able to serve as a regret reliever.” (Tomoe) “Tomoe...” (Makothree)

Oh, oh...

Tomoe and I kissed.

And it doesn't feel like this is the first time.

We are used to it.

I can't believe it.

From all this, this is the most surprising.

With Tomoe huh.

I do think of her as someone dependable, but she is more of a brother, and I... don't see her as a woman.

No well, she is indeed a beautiful woman though.

"...Please forgive this blunder of mine. My body has been blown away without remains, so I unconsciously did something like this." (Tomoe) Her body without remains...

As I thought, this Tomoe is...

There was the shock of that kiss, but I could tell that something even colder and heavier than that was being lodged in my stomach.

It hurts.

Tomoe was smiling all the time, and as if slipping into the thick mist, she dispersed like sand to the wind.

She disappeared.

Don't joke around.

Tomoe and Mio as well!

As if they would be killed by the Goddess!!

Hey, what in the hell did you do?!

Just what kind of stupid path did you take to lose them both?!

And Shiki?! What happened to Shiki?!

Damn it. I don't understand the situation, so the emotions that have nowhere to go create more and more questions.

The surroundings of the me who was alone now, showed an instant change.

The mist that had grown thin was whirling, and disappeared with me at the centre of it.

Eh, this place is...

“Head, I am entering.”

A room I remember, and a familiar voice.

Without waiting for my reply, the owner of the voice enters the room.

As I thought.

When I saw his figure, I immediately thought this; Demon Lord Zef.

“Zef-san.” (Makothree)

“The matter of Tomoe-dono... is regrettable. But even so, I have come here to have a word with you.” (Zef) “It is alright now. I had Tomoe sermon me just a moment ago.” (Makothree) With a loose face, I smile at the Demon Lord.

It feels like I am quite close with Zef-san.

“...By Tomoe-dono?” (Zef)

“Yeah. Seriously, she is a worrywart. She comes to sermon me even after death.” (Makothree) “...”

“And, how are the preparations?” (Makothree)

“Completely done. We are waiting for you, Head.” (Zef)

“I see. Zef-san might have forgiven me, but at this rate, I feel like Rona and Sari will get noisy.” (Makothree) “With Head’s position, it can’t be helped. There’s no choice but to accept it.” (Zef) I see.

The dream’s me has sided with the demon race.

So this is that kind of dream huh.

“Thinking of it like somebody else’s business.” (Makothree)

“It is in truth somebody else’s business after all. You have finally taken off what was burdening you, so I will have you take a break.” (Zef) The Demon Lord looks a lot younger than what my impression of him was.

No, his outward appearance hasn’t changed much, but his atmosphere is kinda different.

“Well, I understand how you feel, but taking a break will have to come

after finishing one job more.” (Makothree) “Fuh, I am aware. Now then, when you leave the room, I will have you change gears, Head. First, we have to encourage the soldiers.” (Zef) The Demon Lord opens the door of the room and waits for me.

As if complying to his words, I walk there and leave to the corridor with the Demon Lord.

Looking at the ceiling, I take a deep breath and exhaled.

“Let’s go, Zef. As a Demon General, I will have you work plenty.” (Makothree) “As you wish. As the new Demon Lord, I will serve you with this life of mine.” (Zef) “The enemy is the Goddess. Do you have the resolve?” (Makothree)

“For a long time. Since the moment I was born a demon.” (Zef)

Demon Lord.

I climbed through the steps of the demon race and became a Demon Lord huh.

Not only that, it seems like it is before stepping against the Goddess.

This me is a lot further than me.

But...by sacrificing Tomoe and Mio.

I clench my teeth.

Looking at the figure and expression of the me who has walked further beyond, I could tell that I was feeling anger.

At that moment, the world creaks.

The scenery of the two walking the corridor had fine cracks appearing.

A displeasing sound as if glass was scraping each other resounded heavily.

I woke up from my dream.



It wasn’t as if I woke up because I was having a nightmare, or because I

was driven out of my dream.

I silently open my eyes.

As usual, it is late at night.

Like the saying goes, the time when plants also sleep.

Don't joke around.

That's not a precognitive dream.

Because they are walking a path that is clearly different from the real me.

But 'if I cooperate with the demon race, it will lead to that result'; there's the chance of something close to that happening.

I have been thinking that the dreams I have had were not just simple dreams.

Tomoe. I should ask Tomoe to record my dreams.

'The memories don't fade, the people just forget about it', is what she said.

In that case, I can reproduce everything including the previous dreams, and check them out.

...It really is no joke.

I don't want to become the Demon Lord, and I don't want to lose Tomoe and Mio.

In the first place, counting the two previous dreams that are starting to become foggy, there's too much bad aftertaste!

I send a thought transmission to Tomoe.

Even if she is sleeping, I intended to wake her up.

(Waka? Weren't you sleeping?) (Tomoe)

(You were awake huh. I have something I wanted to consult you about. Is it okay to do it right now?) (Makoto) I thought that she was definitely sleeping.

What was she doing this late in the night?

(Understood. Then I will head to your room.) (Tomoe)

(No, I will go to you. Are you in your room?) (Makoto)

It is not like I am lonely, but for some reason, I wanted to see Tomoe.

(No, I'm outside. At the forest on the right of the mansion.) (Tomoe)

(Understood.) (Makoto)

Hearing the location of Tomoe, I head there.

The forest huh.

I also go there sometimes to shoot my bow, but I don't normally see Tomoe there.

There's not much distance, so I arrive soon.

"Tomoe, what are you doing?" (Makoto)

"Of course, training. Even if I say this, it is more like solving a puzzle."
(Tomoe) "Solving a puzzle huh." (Makoto)

Tomoe was at the front of one tree.

With her hands at the katana's handle, she had her body slightly low.

I can tell that it is the stance to pull out the katana.

But the distance between her and the tree is too short.

The pommel is hitting the trunk.

With that, you wouldn't be able to draw in the first place.

Is that a new type of meditation?

"Drawing from this stance seems to serve as training." (Tomoe)

"Drawing you say. Isn't that practically zero-distance? Even if you force draw it, won't the handle just hit the tree?" (Makoto) "Yes. Several trees have already fallen. That's probably not the correct way." (Tomoe) Of course it is not.

A person wouldn't normally drop a tree for trying to forcefully draw a

sword.

Just what kind of handle is that.

“Who did you hear that from?” (Makoto)

“I was taught by Hibiki. It seems to be a foundation of the katana.”

(Tomoe) “Then won’t we get it after looking at her memories?” (Makoto)

“Waka, if I do that, I feel like it would go against the point of training.”

(Tomoe) “You are serious in the weirdest of places. I like that though.”

(Makoto) “Just training with the katana is fun, so it doesn’t faze me. Even if today is no good, even if tomorrow is no good, even if the day after tomorrow is no good; I will do my best every day. Well even if I say this, I intended to finish the training for today, but since I received a thought transmission from Waka, I continued for a bit more. And, what was the business you had?” (Tomoe) Wiping her sweat, Tomoe laughs with a satisfied expression.

Uh, it reminds me of the smile of the dream Tomoe.

Stop it.

That was...a dream.

Not reality.

That’s right, I won’t let it become reality.

That’s why I came to meet Tomoe.

“I wanted to check a dream of mine for a bit you see. Dreams also enter in the category of memories right? Can you check them?” (Makoto) “Of course. Is it recent?” (Tomoe)

“Yeah, around ten days ago. I think there’s a day when I was resting at Asora. I am counting on you for that.” (Makoto) “Well then, excuse me while I give it a look.” (Tomoe)

“Don’t look at anything unnecessary, okay?” (Makoto)

“I know.” (Tomoe)

Tomoe’s hand touches my forehead.

Fuh~

Anyways, it might have been something important.

With this, I have one thing less to worry about.

Tomoe closes her eyes and searches my memories.

But to place the handle at the tree and draw huh.

Kuma-sensei who taught me the basics of Iai, no wait, I haven't been taught by sensei, not even once.

... Maybe I just didn't advance to that stage yet.

Is it because I wasn't following the lessons well?

Tomoe said she heard it from Hibiki-senpai, but now that I think about it, there's no training in kendo for drawing, right?

Was senpai learning swordsmanship as well?

In that case, she is more fearsome than I thought.

"...Waka." (Tomoe)

"Ah, did you finish?" (Makoto)

In the time that I was thinking, it seems she had finished.

Okay, this is no time to be sleeping, so I will look at them right now.

"For around 3 days, there were nights when you didn't have a dream but... there wasn't any specially strange dream." (Tomoe) "Eh?" (Makoto)

"Maybe in those 3 days you had a such a deep sleep that you didn't have any dreams?" (Tomoe) "No, there's no way. Ehm, at the day I met Hibiki-senpai... also, at the day when I went to the Empire. Also today, just a moment ago." (Makoto) "I didn't find any. What kind of dreams?" (Tomoe)

"In one I was about to kill senpai, at another I made a desert, then I also became a Demon Lord... uhm, Tomoe and the others were dead."

(Makoto) "...It certainly does sound like a suggestive dream." (Tomoe)

"Are there really none? Memories of me seeing those dreams." (Makoto)

“Yes. Totally.” (Tomoe)

No way.

I certainly did see it and I am able to tell its contents right now.

I saw them, and yet, a dream I didn't see? I feel more and more that those dreams are not mere dreams.

But Tomoe doesn't seem to be lying.

What's going on?

“...Understood. Sorry Tomoe. To ask you for something so late at night.” (Makoto) “No, don't worry about it. Waka, if it's okay with you, I can try searching as many times as you want.” (Tomoe) “No, it is not like pushing will do anything. I will return to my room and note down as much information I remember. I might ask of you again but, at that time, I am counting on you.” (Makoto) “I am sorry for not being of help. Just that, Waka...” (Tomoe)

“Hm?” (Makoto)

“We won't easily die. We are Waka's followers after all. I want you to believe in that.” (Tomoe) “...Yeah, thanks. Good night.” (Makoto)

“Yeah, have a good sleep. I as well...!! If pushing doesn't work, maybe pulling...” (Tomoe) “Hm, Tomoe?” (Makoto)

“M-Maybe!! It was that?! Umu, it might be!!” (Tomoe)

“...Tomoe? Hey~” (Makoto)

“Waka!!” (Tomoe)

“What? You won't sleep?” (Makoto)

“I won't! As expected, Waka is really different!! Umu, there's worth in trying! Sorry Waka, I was thinking about going back with you, but I will be training for a bit more!!” (Tomoe) “Ah...okay. Then, I will be going first.” (Makoto)

“Rest well!!” (Tomoe)

...

Well, it didn't seem like a bad agitation so...let's leave it.

I also have things to do here. Need to write down the contents of the dream.

The first two are kinda hard to say, but the one just now is still fine...I think.

Okay, let's return to my room.

Chapter 187: Gossip – Mind's eye

At the time when Makoto had met with the two heroes and the Demon Lord, the Kuzunoha Company's Rotsgard store was really busy.

The reason is simple, there's not enough hands.

The person that's basically in charge, Shiki, was absent along with his master, and Lime Latte who handled the order taking and delivery, as well as being in the counter, was also absent because of Tomoe's order.

The store that has become wider has a reputation that increases and doesn't decrease.

The employees were unable to handle the customers that arrived.

Of course, there were preparations made beforehand for big transactions, but even so, it was on the borderline of not being able to handle it.

"S-Soon's time to close. But I can't take it any longer. I am leaving early..."

"Are you sleep talking, Eris? Actually, increase the amount of doubles. The customers are coming as if it's the last spurt."

"Hahaha, Akua, I am already a fallen rag. Even if you wring me out, nothing will drip. If I continue attending the customers in this state, even my cosmos will dry up." (Eris) "See, a regular of yours came. Smile smile." (Akua)

"Hm, welcome~~!! Hah...it has already been deeply ingrained in me!!" (Eris) One hour before sunset.

The Kuzunoha Company has received a big amount of customers today too, and the two girls with darkish skin were moving their feet as if there were several people existing, and were doing their best in attending their customers.

The tall height Akua and the short Eris.

Both of them were staggering already. There's Akua who was somehow

enduring, and Eris who is despairing at the remaining time.

The sales limit that the shopkeeper Raidou placed was the saving grace of those girls.

Because there's that, they are able to see a goal.

If they were selling goods with no limit, if they were to sell goods until closing time, the two of them would have probably fallen already.

Raidou's sense for money as a merchant was dull, but this time, the sell limit he set up before going to the Demon Lord audience had coincidentally been a splendid choice.

It could also be said to be a point that made the employees wring out their stamina to the limit.

"It's less than one hour now. Fight on, Eris. Even if you are all dried up, wring yourself out as if you were to break. And then, drink. Drink with everyone." (Akua) "If Lime were here...if at least Lime were here..." (Eris)

"Because of Tomoe-sama's orders, he is in Lorel at this moment. Don't ask for the impossible." (Akua) "...I have decided. I will be drinking a lime flavored banana bliss today." (Eris) "The cocktail that Lime suggested huh. Even if he looks that way, he is unexpectedly a reliable man after all. About that alcohol, Waka-sama gave it a name, so maybe there's already a precedent though." (Akua) "...In a tankard." (Eris)

"...It won't liberate you, you know. But I will accompany in one drink. Then let's have a drinking party today at Asora. Yeah, let's do our best." (Akua) "So number six was not enough. I have to wake up already. The ultimate cost." (Eris) "That's why I'm telling you to stop sleep talking. Ah, welcome~! Today...yes, that's right. I really did think that it was a bit fast for the season. Then, how about this one here?" (Akua) "I am expecting the souvenir to be expensive...damn Lime!!!" (Eris)

The night was only beginning, but it was to the point that closing was in sight already.

The Kuzunoha Company was prosperous.



“Achoo!”

“Ara Lime, is that a cold?”

“No, someone must have been gossiping about me.” (Lime)

“It would be good if that’s the case though. You are vigorous at night after all. I hope you won’t get stabbed in time.”

“It is a different body from the one I use when acting separately from hero-dono’s party. Don’t worry.” (Lime) There’s roof tiles and godowns, but in this strange scenery of a town that’s slightly different from that of Japan, there’s a male and female walking.

The man is Lime Latte, a member of Kuzunoha Company, and currently acting together with the hero.

The woman is Otonashi Hibiki.

Entitled as a hero by the Limia Kingdom, and also the existence that serves as the hope of humans in the war between humans and demons.

The shopkeeper of the Kuzunoha Company, Raidou -or Mizumi Makoto-, was in a relationship of senior and junior with her.

“It is not like I am telling you to stop indulging in women at night. I do think that if you are doing it fairly, I don’t really mind.” (Hibiki) “Heh~, for a young woman, you are tolerant.” (Lime)

“Wudi has a wife and baby, and he is head-over-heels in love with her. Bredda doesn’t seem to have the spirit to buy prostitutes. Looking at him, I think he doesn’t have experience with women yet. I don’t intend to tell him to play around with women, but I don’t have much opinion of it either.” (Hibiki) “...There’s still one more thing regarding Bredda, right?” (Lime)

“So you could tell huh. He seems to like me. I am happy to be liked but... I don’t intend to answer his feelings.” (Hibiki) “How straight. Then I think telling him quickly would be kindness in itself.” (Lime) “If he confesses to me, I will properly reject him. To reject him because I have noticed his

feelings, don't you think that would leave a bad aftertaste? He also has to properly resolve himself and say it. I think that putting an end to it in this way, will leave less regrets. Aren't men like that?" (Hibiki) "...I don't know if to call you kind or strict. Well, it is not my business. I was the one who threw the conversation, but please do as you please." (Lime) Lime lifts his hands up and shrugs his shoulders.

"I will do that. Sorry for having you accompany me today." (Hibiki) "Don't worry. The two are down with an endemic disease, so it can't be helped." (Lime) "Wudi and Bredda are unlucky. Or maybe Lime is the lucky one." (Hibiki) "It is without doubt me being lucky. That's why I am alive, and working at the Kuzunoha Company." (Lime) "Can I hear about that?" (Hibiki)

"I don't mind. Well, there's a lot I can't answer though." (Lime)

"...What's that. In the first place, why are you in Lorel when you should be doing business at Rotsgard and Tsige?" (Hibiki) At the location that Hibiki and Lime were walking to, there's a building bigger than others.

At the end of the long stairs, there's a temple.

Their steps told that this is their objective.

"Lorel's big shots are inviting my boss all the time. Telling him if he wants to put a store here. And so, I am doing a preliminary inspection. Being together with you guys was a coincidence, you know?" (Lime) Lime's true objective is to investigate the movements of Hibiki and her party.

But in order to have them think otherwise, he gives out a reason that Tomoe properly laid out beforehand.

In that point, there were no holes.

"The big shots huh. The names?" (Hibiki)

"Hey hey, it feels like you are interrogating me. It is someone called Sairitz. You are free to confirm with the other party, but I ask you to keep it a secret that you heard this from me. If they learn that I am here to inspect, there will be a parade of thought transmissions and letters

coming to Boss again. You are the senpai of Boss, right? Lending a bit of help to your kohai would be nice.” (Lime) “Sairitz... Hmph~, understood. I won’t bring out your name.” (Hibiki) “Counting on that.” (Lime)

“If you are talking about senpai and kohai, I would want some helping hand for the senpai as well.” (Hibiki) “You are the senpai, so I ask you to be a bit tolerant on that. Boss is filled to the brim busy, and is suffering.” (Lime) “...What a troublesome kohai.” (Hibiki)

The two walk up the wide stone stairs.

At the center there’s a handrail, and a lot of people are walking up.

It can be seen at one glance that there were a lot of people on their pilgrimage.

“Even so...Lorel is really enthusiastic about their Spirit religion. If I remember correctly, it is a Water Spirit. It is clearly receiving more believers than the Goddess.” (Hibiki) “For the commoners, they are the ones who have more appearance than the Goddess, and also, the High Spirits are a strong existence, so it is a religion that’s plenty reasonable to direct their belief at. Also, even if I say it is a Spirit religion, Spirits are all serving the Goddess, it is in essence, a religion of the Goddess.” (Lime) “You seem to be...quite knowledgeable.” (Hibiki)

“To the point that you have a different impression of me now? Then let me add one more thing while at it. In the past, at the time when the demon race made its great march, the Earth and Fire Spirit that lend their help to them were called low Spirits because of it. In truth, the medium Spirits that possess will of their own, there are some that are called High Spirits but...well, regarding these two, there aren’t many humans or demons that continue their belief towards them though. Dwarfs are stubborn so they continue their faith towards the Earth Spirit, but because of their proficient arm in smithing, their eyes are not focused on it.” (Lime) “...Impressive. Are the employees of Kuzunoha Company required to have these amount of knowledge before being allowed to enter?” (Hibiki) “I wonder. In our place, we have a tendency to excel at one trait, so there’s no real need to know things, as long as you have a specialty, you

can manage to enter, probably.” (Lime) “Then maybe I should enter as well. With the connection of Misumi Makoto.” (Hibiki) “A connection is not a talent. Is the job of a hero darker than it shows?” (Lime) “Pitch black. The environment is also close to the worst. Well, what’s more important is if it’s worth doing huh. I can’t stop after all. Can’t I work in the side lines? Even if it’s by connection, I am confident that I will be an employee that can bring you benefits though.” (Hibiki) “Our place doesn’t accept being a side job. Too bad.” (Lime)

“Ara. Fuh~ we have finally arrived. Seriously, what a long stair. Chiya-chan said she is almost done but, what do you think?” (Hibiki) “If she can’t handle this much, she would be lacking in training. Even if you ask me what I think, I can’t say anything since I don’t know what that Priestess is doing. I only tagged along with you here.” (Lime) “...You really don’t know what Chiya-chan is doing?” (Hibiki)

“...Yeah, I don’t.” (Lime)

“Then, I will leave it at that.” (Hibiki)

“I’m not being trusted.” (Lime)

“Fufu.” (Hibiki)

While doing small talk, Hibiki and Lime enter the temple.

After doing a simple check and confirming their identity, they were led into a room inside the temple.

The reason why they came -or more like Hibiki came-was because she was told that her party member, the Priestess Chiya’s training would be finished by today.

Even if she is young, she is a dependable comrade, and Hibiki herself has come to meet her.

She wanted her party members Wudi and Bredda to come with her, but they are ill right now. That’s why, for some reason, Hibiki came along with Lime, a Kuzunoha Company employee she met at Lorel.

Even Hibiki could only say that she instinctively invited him.

Because she felt that going alone would be dangerous.

Lime didn't get agitated at the sudden invitation of the hero. He carefreely accepted to go along with her to her destination.

There's no better distance to accomplish the order of Tomoe to investigate the hero's movement, so his actions could be said to be obvious.

"And? That Priestess-san, how does she get stronger?" (Lime)

"That's a secret." (Hibiki)

"If possible, I would be grateful if she were to grow able to defend herself." (Lime) "Grateful? What do you mean by—!!" (Hibiki)

Hibiki's face showed agitation in one instant.

"So you noticed." (Lime)

"Something's strange." (Hibiki)

"Strange huh. Well, if you are saying this out of instinct, that's pretty impressive. That, draw it out." (Lime) Lime places a hand to the katana at his waist, and looks at the sword at the back of Hibiki.

"An enemy? But Lorel has never received the invasion of the Demon race, not even once." (Hibiki) "Who knows. I don't know about the demons, but for now, it is a matter of fact that they have secluded the space. The place we are in right now could be called a separate space." (Lime) "Secluding space? Are you saying a barrier has been activated?" (Hibiki) "That's how it is. But it is quite large-scale. I don't think this is a defensive mechanism of the temple. Someone must have set this up at the shadows of the temple, taking its time. That's how it feels." (Lime) Lime calmly analyzes the situation.

As a spy of the Kuzunoha Company, he didn't show any signs of being agitated or bewildered.

He detected the abnormality faster than anyone, and had begun to think before anyone else.

"?!! Then, what about Chiya-chan?!" (Hibiki)

“Yeah, there’s a high probability that she is in danger. That’s why I tried asking how strong she has gotten.” (Lime) “What kind of leisure is that! Lend me a hand. We will immediately go save her!” (Hibiki) “...Okay, I will lend it. Don’t forget that word.” (Lime)

“Yeah, it is fine to think of it as a debt. I will return it in time.” (Hibiki) “No no, there’s no need to think of it in such an exaggerated manner. It is fine to just tell me what that Priestess-san was planning on obtaining. I have a nature of wanting to know things that I want to know no matter what, you see.” (Lime) “Then I will tell you while we move. You are a vanguard, right?” (Hibiki) Hibiki asks after seeing the katana.

Lime nods.

“Yeah, even if it’s side by side, or back to back, I will do a decent job at it.” (Lime) Don

Hibiki kicks open the wooden door.

The corridor showed a slight fluctuation as if warping, something it didn’t show in the past.

Different from a normal space, it was a scenery that was practically proving they were in an unstable place.

“Then follow me. I will have you do both side and back.” (Hibiki)

“Understood. First, right or left? Hero-dono knows the place where the Priestess-san is, right?” (Lime) “Right. Also, it is fine to call me Hibiki. Calling me Hero-dono is kind of itchy. For people that stand in the same battlefield, I actually don’t want to be called in that way.” (Hibiki) “Hibiki huh. If you want me to call you that way, I don’t really mind. Then, let’s go.” (Lime) “Okay. Horn!” (Hibiki)

“Oh.” (Lime)

Responding to the call of Hibiki, the silver belt that was wrapped around her waist summoned a type of wolf.

“Let’s go to where Chiya-chan is. If you notice something, tell me.” (Hibiki) The wolf nods at the words of its master.

It seemed like it was able to understand the meaning.

“If you were going to summon, tell me so. I got surprised there.” (Lime)
“Ara, I am sorry. I normally don’t team up with temporary members, so I was indifferent about it.” (Hibiki) Two people and one animal run.

Just like what Lime said, the temple had become like a dungeon.

There were times when the corridor went a different course, and doors that had no locks couldn’t be opened. Also, there were mamonos appearing in the temple; something that would never happen.

They were all hostile, and mercilessly attacked Hibiki’s group who were trying to hurry.

“You are fighting with quite the leisure!! As I thought, you are not a simple employee!” (Hibiki) “I just have enough ability to be sent to do a preliminary inspection in a foreign country. More importantly, counting that wolf-san over there, you possess power that doesn’t shame the name of hero. I see you in a different light now!” (Lime) But Hibiki’s group didn’t deal with them. They were all mostly defeated in one hit, and they were actually increasing their speed as time went.

Lime was observing Hibiki at times, nodding at times, and following her perfectly.

He followed Hibiki’s speed without losing breath, moreover, looking at how he swung his sword as if reading her very breath, the phantom of her past companion surfaced in her mind, but she chased it away.

Hibiki told herself: ‘Naval won’t return’.

“Oh, looks like it is here?” (Lime)

“...Wah?” (Hibiki)

(This guy is incredible. His breathing is not affected at all. Moreover, he is acting in a way that doesn’t get in my way. He is really like Naval. No, he is most likely a lot more skilled than her.) (Hibiki) Even though Hibiki was the one running ahead, she was surprised that she was more tired than Lime who was following from behind, and was also surprised by his

movements.

“Should we rest for a bit? It seems the Priestess-san is safe, you know?”
(Lime) “...”

While recovering her breath, Hibiki silently shakes her head.

(Also, it is the same with me. I felt like I was clearly stronger than normal. Is this person, Lime, the one that brought out that power from me? No way, there's no way that's the case but...) (Hibiki) She does a big sigh.

And then, when Hibiki lifts her gaze, there's the back of Lime.

For some reason, that back of his looked quite big in Hibiki's eyes.

“But, the heart's eye? Or was it the mind's eye? I'm surprised she was able to endure with only that power. She didn't seem especially strong in fights after all, that Priestess-san.” (Lime) Lime makes a reference of the new power of the Priestess that he heard from Hibiki in the way. The name of the power that Hibiki told Lime was the mind's eye. The eye of the heart.

The power to see through the real appearance of the target without exceptions; a power that only the Priestess possesses. But Hibiki was hiding one thing from Lime.

That the mind's eye is a power akin to a side effect.

The objective of this time's ceremony was to enhance power in all aspects, and by doing that process, she also ends up obtaining the mind's eye.

Hibiki didn't tell Lime about the power enhancement.

“That's..., no, let's go!!” (Hibiki)

Hibiki almost told everything to Lime.

But just as she was about to, she stops.

It is certainly true that they cooperating now, but Lime Latte is a member of the Kuzunoha Company.

And in the eyes of Hibiki, the Kuzunoha Company is an incredibly dangerous existence.

She felt it was dangerous to reveal everything.

“Got it.” (Lime)

“!!”

Lime complies, and then opens the big door.

At that place, there's the figure of Chiya on her knees, both hands put together, and her eyes closed making a prayer.

Then, she saw the strong barrier that was protecting her.

“Demons huh. Why is it, I feel like this doesn't give off the smell of something planned. It is not good, and it is not like them either.” (Lime)
Lime mutters.

In his eyes, there were reflected three demons surrounding the Priestess' barrier.

Lime could tell that she was breathing in and forming a spell.

At her surroundings, there's the corpses of the Priestess' bodyguards.

From the scenery that was reflected in his eyes, Lime felt some sort of occurrence involved in this ill-preparedness.

“Wait. Right, the mind's eye huh. Because of her acquiring that ability, she saw things that she didn't think would see, and that's why those three got agitated and did this huh. Then this state is also...” (Lime) “You!!” (Hibiki)

“!!!”

Lime was analyzing the situation from the information.

But it seems he was the only one who was calm.

Lime who heard an angered voice from his right side, looks at the direction where Hibiki should be.

The silver belt suddenly shone and wraps her whole body.

At the same time, Lime felt a strange upsurge of power, and in the next moment, Hibiki's figure had disappeared.

That's right, even in the eyes of Lime that were trained by Tomoe, Hibiki looked like she had disappeared.

Lime unconsciously felt something cold at his back.

"Gyaaa!!"

"...Seriously?" (Lime)

Hearing the scream at the front, Lime learned of Hibiki's whereabouts.

She was at the side of Chiya's barrier.

And there were three corpses of demons as well.

It wasn't as if they could react to it.

Luckily, only the third one was able to scream because he 'hit' the barrier by reflex. The other two weren't even able to react at all, and were severed in one strike.

The one who was able to scream as well, it clearly showed that he received a fatal hit from one attack.

It didn't turn into an instant death, that's all.

In no time, the demon spat out a large amount of blood and died.

(Good grief. It is the proper practice to let one live and have it spill out the beans. For Hibiki, that Priestess might be a special existence. In that case, if there's a need to restrain her, that Priestess might be useful. There's no real need to take her hostage; just by mentioning it to her, her movements would dull. Even so...that was unbelievable speed. Like that, I wouldn't be able to react. If dealt wrong, I would also be defeated in an instant. I am glad I got to see it...along with that incredible outfit. It is more eye candy than scary. Let's admire it.) (Lime) Lime places the entire movements of Hibiki in his head. Counting the Priestess' existence, the strong barrier she created, and the super speed that might be Hibiki's ace.

...And also the really high exposure rate outfit she uses when showing

that speed.

“Are you okay, Chiya-chan?!” (Hibiki)

“Hibiki-oneechan! You came! You really came~!!” (Chiya)

The barrier crumbles, and Hibiki and Chiya hug each other.

“I’m glad! I’m truly glad I made it in time! It is alright now, I am here.”

(Hibiki) “It was scary, but I believed that you would definitely come rescue me! That’s why I had my barrier up all the time and doing my best!”

(Chiya) Chiya’s way of dealing with the situation was truly childish, and at the same time, it could be said to be truly composed and brave.

Instead of going to a poor offensive, the chances of a mistake are low, and it will assure that she will live longer.

The price is that she wouldn’t be able to eliminate the enemy, so her chances of survival hinged on how much you can rely on someone coming to help.

Chiya betted on the help, and she splendidly won the bet.

“I’m sorry for ruining your heartwarming reunion, but how about returning for now, you two? Watching a child and a young girl hugging each other at a blood filled altar, is a bit unsavory.” (Lime) “Uh...you are right. Lime, you really helped me out in this occasion. Thanks.” (Hibiki) “Not really. I did properly get the compensation, so minding it too much will only tire me, please stop it. If it’s not enough to show your gratefulness, invite me a dinner. I will be fine with that. Hm? What’s wrong, Priestess-san?” (Lime) “...A large tree that raises up a forest. Also... a dragon and welcoming rain.” (Chiya) Chiya suddenly mutters this with distant eyes as she looks at Lime.

“...Ah?” (Lime)

“Chiya-chan?” (Hibiki)

“A person that gives a lot of peace of mind...” (Chiya)

“Hibiki, it seems the Priestess is quite tired. Quickly finish reporting this and have her rest. No matter the circumstances, she is still a child after

all.” (Lime) “Right, I will do that. Chiya-chan, can you stand?” (Hibiki)

“Yeah, I’m fine. Oneechan is...Oneechan. Amazing, nothing changed.”
(Chiya) “...Really?” (Hibiki)

“Yeah!” (Chiya)

Hibiki and Lime look at each other.

Wondering about Chiya-chan who is for some reason laughing happily.

The three leave the abnormal space of the temple’s altar, and head to the temple’s waiting room.

Lime was making a thinking expression as he walked, and suddenly lifted his head.

“Oh right, it might be troublesome if they learn that I am here, so I will be leaving first. See ya, Hibiki, Priestess-san.” (Lime) “Wait a moment, you are an involved party as well!” (Hibiki)

“Lime-san!!” (Chiya)

“It is fine to just have it as if I wasn’t there and take the credit. Hibiki, don’t forget the dinner. I will be returning to the inn.” (Lime) Lime says this rapidly, and leaves the two at the waiting room.

“That Priestess-san, it seems the mind’s eye sees something without regards to the other party’s mind protection. I should report this as well. This is bad, it is almost time to submit the report to Sis! I have to go to a place without people and return quickly!!” (Lime) At the Lorel Union, Lime was involved with Hibiki bit by bit.

He still didn’t notice that this one incident would unexpectedly deepen his friendship with those girls.

Chapter 188: Power is needed even in a temple visit?

“A friendly match, you say?”

“Umu.”

The next day after seeing an absurd dream like becoming the next Demon Lord, the Demon Lord Zef said one of the things I kinda expected.

Yesterday he was repeatedly saying ‘power’, after all.

“The type of battle that probes each other’s personality, right?”
(Makoto) Leaving aside the way of putting it, he is telling me to fight while being treated as a guest.

I ended up asking for a confirmation.

“Yeah. Don’t worry, a bit of spectators will gather, but it is fine for Raidou-dono’s group to fight as normal.” (Zef) It is fine, he says.

I can kinda predict who my opponent will be.

We did say that as long as there’s merits for us, we wouldn’t mind accepting, but...what should I do?

Currently, it would only scare them, so I just have to properly hold back and act in a gentlemanly way. In that way, their impression of us would actually get better.

“By the way, who will be our opponent?” (Makoto)

“The opponent this one will be assigning will be a Demon General or someone who has an ability close to that. Even if this one says it is a friendly match, it is only that this one needs some sort of proof of friendship with the Kuzunoha Company. In truth, it would be troublesome if you get too serious and it turns into hatred.” (Zef) “...A proof of friendship. Yesterday’s banquet was plenty enough to tell us about your friendship though.” (Makoto) The Demon Lord and everyone else made a banquet, and there wasn’t any people looking down on us.

Actually, it was so friendly to the level that I am scared of ulterior motives.

“That makes me happy. Well, today’s plan is to guide you to the Spirit’s temple; if there’s extra time, look around the area of the castle, speak with the people of the castle, you can spend it however you wish. If your side accepts the match, this one would like to begin tomorrow.” (Zef)

“Tomorrow. Understood. I will consult this with my followers and consider it positively.” (Makoto) “Please do so. This one won’t be able to guide you, but this one will have my two daughters, Sari and Lucia, go with you. Send my greetings to the Spirits.” (Zef) Hah?

“...Eh? We will be meeting the spirits? I mean, we can meet them?” (Makoto) “Of course. It seems like they took an interest in Raidou-dono. Fire and Earth High Spirits. They are not our allies only, but they are generous people that don’t hesitate in assisting us. Maybe you will end up meshing well with them.” (Zef) Spirits... When it comes to High ones, I have not met any.

I had the impression that they were all from the side of the Goddess, so it was hard to get close to them. And most of all, I had no opportunity to.

Meeting one at the demon race territory for the first time, feels quite mysterious.

“I thought we were going there to pray or something. Learning that I will be meeting with a Spirit makes me nervous.” (Makoto) I thought it would be like going to a Shinto shrine.

Not only am I going to a place where they reside, but I am going to be meeting them in person. Moreover, with how things are going, it is as if meeting them is already a set deal.

How annoying.

“Your Majesty, it is almost time.”

“Waka-sama, the preparations are ready.”

Oh, the Demon Lord is busy every day, that’s obvious.

Rona lowers her head and comes to get Zef-san.

Is she filling the job of secretary at the times she is in the castle?

“Good work, Rona. This one will be going soon. Raidou-dono, the guides this one told you a while ago are waiting at the main gate. This one hopes you will enjoy the demon race’s city today as well. Then, this one will be excusing himself.” (Zef) “Thank you very much.” (Makoto)

I see off Zef-san who is leaving along with Rona.

“Shiki, is Mio already outside?” (Makoto)

I ask Shiki who came to call me, and ask him about Mio who I can’t see.

“Yes. Mio-dono is also enjoying the area around the castle. It is a section that she didn’t check yesterday, it seems.” (Shiki) “I see. You probably heard already, but it seems like there’s guides at the main gates waiting, so let’s hurry. Sari-san and Lucia-san. If I remember correctly...two children of the Demon Lord.” (Makoto) “Yeah, those two huh. Going through the trouble of choosing two women, I wonder if there’s some sort of reason behind it.” (Shiki) “...I don’t think so. And what about you Shiki? It seems like you were together with Rona, could it be you two get along better now?” (Makoto) I could tell Shiki was trying to tease me.

Lately, I have been able to not take things seriously and deal with them, so I think I am getting a bit used to it.

“It was a stupid confrontation between a fox and a racoon. No matter how friendly they get, they won’t be able to match. With Kuzunoha Company and Waka-sama’s matter, their amount of information is so low it couldn’t even be called a match though. Even if she looked like that, she was quite mortified.” (Shiki) “Ahaha... I am kinda scared of the future. The grudge of a woman. Ah, by the way, Demon Lord-sama said that he wanted us to do a friendly match with them but, is it okay to accept?” (Makoto) “...Yes. Please accept it. I have a slight idea of what they are trying to stick their nose into. If that’s the case, we will be able to obtain something that will not be a loss for us.” (Shiki) “Is that information something you got from Rona?” (Makoto) “Yeah. She probably purposely leaked out the information to have us accept the match. Their aim is not

really disadvantageous for Waka-sama, so in this occasion, let's receive everything they give us." (Shiki) "Understood. Then, we will have to tell Mio as well. I am counting on you for the follow-up so that Reft-san doesn't end up against Mio." (Makoto) "As you wish." (Shiki)

While walking together to the outside of the castle, I enjoyed a morning talk with the dependable Shiki.

It calms me.

Fuh~, no matter how frankly Zef-san smiles, just speaking with him makes me tired.



"Then, Raidou-dono is putting special effort in developing a medicine for the curse disease?"

"Yeah. That's where we are putting most of our efforts in. If you need medicine, order it from us." (Makoto) "I am the person tasked to guide Raidou-dono today. Even if that weren't the case, you are a guest invited by his Majesty, so there's no need to speak formally. Please speak to me without worries like you do with your followers."

...The youngest girl I know here is probably Rinon.

This girl called Sari is probably in the same age.

Her appearance is similar to that of Rinon, a primary schooler.

Lately, that girl has grown a bit bigger and her appearance has begun to look more curvy like that of a woman, so when thinking of that point, this girl Sari actually looks younger huh.

Her way of speaking is incredibly mature though.

Her matureness makes me think of a feudal lord that has been appointed at a young age.

The maturing speed in this world is honestly faster than that of Japan.

A bit of time has passed since I have gone to Tsige. When I went, I remember Rinon told me: 'Rinon is already over 10 year old, so Rinon is

not a kid anymore.’.

I think that a 10 year old is still a kid, but in truth, Rinon is keeping tabs of her sister’s expenses, earning herself, and she is already skilled at housechores.

If she were in Japan, she would be an incredibly level-headed girl.

I don’t want to compare her to my 10 year old self, I would feel pathetic after all.

“Even if you say so, it doesn’t sit right to speak with the two Demon Lord candidates in the same way as I speak with my followers.” (Makoto) “I didn’t really tell you to speak with me casually though.” (Lucia) Lucia-san is hard to deal with in a different meaning.

This one responds with a smile when I speak to her, but that smile of hers feels completely business-like.

But aside from that, there’s no other action.

When I glance at her expression for a bit, I could see that she also had a discouraged expression at times.

From the four successors, she is the one that looks like a military person the most, so maybe she is displeased in guiding a merchant.

“Sorr–” (Makoto)

“You are...” (Lucia)

Interrupting my apology, Lucia-san speaks to me for the first time without a smile.

“Y-Yes?” (Makoto)

“A person that has been recognized by my mentor Io, and also my father and Lord Zef who excels in magic and spear.” (Lucia) Hm?

So it is not like she is angry?

It feels like she is in ill humour, and yet, the contents of her words are just...

“It is vexing, but I still can’t measure the limits of your power, or how

much it is at all. But if you have that much power, don't you think you should learn to have more pride and attitude befitting that power?"

(Lucia) "Pride and attitude huh." (Makoto)

Is she telling me to appeal by saying things like: 'I am strong!'?

"Most of the strong people have reached that strength by defeating many. Then isn't the duty of the strong to engrave their feelings and accumulated experience, and act confidently? But you are actually trying to hide that power. I can't comprehend that, and I can't consent to it."

(Lucia) "Lucia-anesama, that way of speaking is rude towards Raidou-dono." (Sari) "Sari, you have a tolerant mind like Rona, so you can endure it, but for me, I can't bear the way Raidou-dono acts. I find it hard to believe that my mentor Io was defeated by someone like this. He most likely used an underhanded..." (Lucia) Maybe she doesn't like me, because she is the disciple of Io.

I see.

It is certainly true that sending him flying with a Rocket Punch can be considered an underhanded method.

I did accept the friendly match, so as long as I properly proof my ability in the fight, I feel like I can clear the misunderstanding.

"The weak really do bark a lot."

...

"...What did you say just now, follower-dono?" (Lucia)

Mio?!!

Since when did you return from the food cart?!

Mio who had both hands filled with snacks, cuts into the words of Lucia-san..

"You are not even in a position to speak about this and that of Waka-sama, and don't even have the power, and yet, only your words are splendid huh. That's all I said-desu." (Mio) Your words are harsh, Mio.

Lucia-san is trembling.

I don't even need to try reading her emotion, it is clearly anger.

Would it be bad if I don't stop it?

But I kinda feel it is unnatural.

Hm, in these moments, it is better to take a step back and increase my field of vision as much as possible.

I will take care of not acting by reflex.

...Ah, it is Sari.

She is way too silent.

It is strange that she only tried to control the situation by doing a light interruption.

Maybe it is all a play?

Or could it be that Lucia-san's speech and conduct are real, but Sari is plotting something?

From how the conversation went, it seems like Sari is similar to Rona, so it might be possible.

Then I should be careful that Mio doesn't go way too overboard...

"...I have done my best in training everyday under the tutelage of Io and Reft, two Demon Generals. Since the day I grasped a sword, there hasn't been a single day when I haven't trained. And Mio-dono is saying that I am weak? If you don't take back those words, I will take this as an insult."
(Lucia) She is seriously angry.

I think.

As I thought, maybe Sari is really the one utilizing this situation.

Don't hurry it. Calmly look over the transition of the situation.

"Reft...You are receiving instructions from a person of that level-desu ka? I am sorry for the rudeness. It seems like it wasn't even a point of being weak or strong, but simple wailing of a baby. I wasn't mature enough. I take back what I said-desu wa." (Mio) "It is an insult huh."
(Lucia)

“Ara? Didn’t you hear me saying that I take it back? Do you have ears?”
(Mio) ...Mio has gotten better at stirring things up.

Women are scary.

If I was told that using my bow was playing with a toy, I would most likely get angry by reflex.

“Get ready. There’s no need to wait for the friendly match. I will confirm that strength of yours here.” (Lucia) “You will gaze upon your own figure that will not be able to recover anymore, and regret your rude remarks of Waka-sama.”) An atmosphere that things have gone to a critical point was enveloping the surroundings.

I even feel like sparks are flying.

Yeah, this is as far as it goes.

Let’s stop it.

There’s still something that is in my mind after all.

Sari seems to be seriously looking over the situation and has not noticed, and Shiki seems to have already made a slight investigation about it.

“Hold it.” (Makoto)

“?!!”

“...Uh, Waka-sama.” (Mio)

I restrain both of their bodies by grabbing them with the magic armor that is currently invisible.

Mio can escape if she wanted to, but she understood what I was trying to do, so she didn’t escape.

Lucia-san was... not only unable to escape, it also seems like she doesn’t understand what is restraining her in the first place.

I grabbed her the moment before she drew her weapon, so physically speaking, she can’t move at all.

“Lucia-san, Sari-san, my companion has been rude, I apologize in her stead. And Lucia-san, even without drawing your sword in the middle of

the city, we intend to participate in the friendly match, so please wait until tomorrow. More importantly, I have something that has been slightly bothering me for a while now.” (Makoto) “Raidou-dono, this restrain...is it your doing?” (Lucia)

“Yes.” (Makoto)

“...At what moment were you able to use such a spell?” (Lucia) “I will release it soon. But first of all, there’s something I want to ask the two of you. I believe that those two big temples that are lined up are the temples of the Spirits, but is that place always ‘like that’?” (Makoto) “Eh?!!”

“What?!!!!”

Achaaa...

This atmosphere, it feels like some sort of incident is happening?

The two of them look at that ‘distortion’, and seem to be surprised.

At the place where I pointed my finger at, at the place where the two temples are lined up, the landscape at its surrounding seems to be distorted.

It was an unnatural feeling, like seeing something through the filter of a camera.

It looked like the place where the Spirits are supposed to be, so I thought it normally looked like this, but it seems that’s not the case.

I release the hands that were grabbing Mio and Lucia-san.

“Shiki, did you find out anything?” (Makoto)

“I can feel thick Spirit power. The power of fire and earth. It is rising as if trying to compete with each other, meshing with the surroundings, and seems to be affecting it. I don’t know the reason of it yet.” (Shiki) So the power of the Spirits is so thick that it is distorting the landscape huh.

It wouldn’t surprise me much if this were a secluded region, but it is right in the middle of the city.

I feel like this is a serious matter.

“Just in case I will ask but, it is not always like this, right?” (Makoto) “Of course. If it were always like that, it would be a struggle to even go there to pray.” (Lucia) “This is the first time I have seen it become like this.” (Sari) Good grief.

It would be better to return to the castle and report to Zef-san.

“Then we should go report to his Majesty. The faster the better.”
(Makoto) “No, wait.” (Lucia)

“Please wait.” (Sari)

“?”

I think I did a reasonable opinion, and yet, the two of them stopped me.

Lucia and Sari look at each other and nod.

“Raidou-dono, by the name of the Demon Lord’s children, I assure your safety. I want to enter the temple like this to investigate. Can I ask for your cooperation?” (Sari) “I concur with my sister’s words. As an apology for the rudeness just now, we will show you our strength, and we will also protect you.” (Lucia) “No, if it is something important, I think that having his Majesty decide is more important.” (Makoto) “...I don’t see people inside the distorted space. This is probably something planned. The Spirit temple is a popular place for us you see. In normal circumstances, it would be impossible that no one’s there at daytime. There’s only a restricted amount of people that know that we will be heading there today. In that case, this is...” (Sari) “It might be the order of his Majesty telling us to deal with this situation. Raidou-dono, please.” (Lucia) The younger sister complements the words of the elder one.

But if there’s some sort of coup d’etat going inside there, it would be no joke.

Even if he is the Demon Lord, would he really put the successors in a dangerous situation when there’s an army he can mobilize in this city?

Or maybe he is trying to make us do something as well?

If I comply here, I will be able to obtain a bit of good will from them, but

it also feels like it will become messy.

“...Yeah.”

“Waka-sama, it may be presumptuous of me to say this, but in this abnormal situation, if there’s citizens dragged in it, it would be terrible. The residents that are supposed to be passing their lives out of harm’s way, it would be bad if by any chance, they were to lose their life. Lucia-dono and Sari-dono must be saying all this because of a sense of responsibility as successors of the Demon Lord, so I think that it would be good to listen to their proposal.” (Shiki) Shiki...

This is not like Shiki. It is quite a humane speech.

Regarding the residents of the demon race, not only Mio, even Shiki most likely thinks of them as being worth as much as dirt.

At the very least, it felt that way in all the conversations we have had till now.

And yet, he suddenly says something that was as if stating lives are heavier than the world.

“Shiki, did you go crazy or something? For us, no matter how many people in this city die, it would be of no consequence. Only these two want to save them, and it is actually a bother to Waka-sama-desu. AL-SO! You must have heard the rude-beyond-belief words of this woman, didn’t you? There’s no need to accommodate to their circumstances.” (Mio) Mio has said too much.

Way too much.

“Mio-dono, it is true that those words of hers were rude. But, right now we should forget about such trifle, and secure the safety of the demon residents as fast as possible which would show Waka-sama’s good will towards the demon race. Waka-sama is not a person that would think of people’s lives as a bother.” (Shiki) ...

Did he reach some sort of enlightenment?

But his expression and the light in his eyes are the same Shiki.

Hm...then, let's try betting on it.

To tell the truth, I did consider it slightly bothersome, so I wanted to ignore it. But instead of concurring with Mio that has made an extreme statement, it would be better to concur with Shiki who has made a humane statement. In this occasion, it might become a plus.

“Mio, bear with it please. It is something that's happening in the middle of the city, so since Lucia-san and Sari-san feel like this is an emergency that demands this sort of action, we as the guests should not go against it. They did say that they will be protecting us, so let's continue on like this.” (Makoto) “...If Waka-sama says so, I don't mind. I will protect Waka-sama, so there won't be any danger anyways.” (Mio) “Great judgment, Waka-sama. I will also be protecting Waka-sama with all I have.” (Shiki) “Thanks, both of you. Lucia-san, Sari-san, just as scheduled, we will be counting on you to guide us to the temple.” (Makoto) “I am grateful, Raidou-dono. I apologize for my previous rudeness.” (Lucia) “Thanks, Raidou-dono. I promise you that I will have you return without any injuries, even if I have to risk my life.” (Sari) What exaggerated words.

It really doesn't feel like the words of a kid.

The gap with her appearance is incredibly.

I look at the temples that are within the swaying landscape.

I wonder how strong a High Spirit is.

In case it ends up in a fight, I should have my bow Azusa ready at any given time.

I was able to fight pretty well with Athena-sama, so I think I will be able to handle this.

There's no way they are stronger than Gods after all.

Well, it should be fine.

The chances are low, but it might be like a welcoming of the Spirits.

The Goddess is like that, so it wouldn't be strange if anything happened.

Let's hope it is some sort of surprise for welcoming us.

“Then, let’s go.”

“Now then, I will be opening a path to enter. Please wait for a bit.” (Sari)
From here on it’s the distorted space. When I suggested we enter, Sari answered me.

Mio was about to say something, but I stop her.

‘Can’t we just enter from here? It feels like we can though.’, is probably what Mio was going to say as well, so I stopped her.

Sari faces the space and concentrates. She makes a long chant and is interfering with it.

“Sari-dono seems to be a proficient magician. Even though you are still young, you have amazing potential.” (Shiki) “Thanks, Shiki-dono. She may be my little sister, but she is a talented mage that even within the demon race, there’s few who can teach her magic. She is not specialized in barriers, but she will definitely open a path.” (Lucia) Shiki and Lucia-san were speaking of that topic in a low voice.

Lucia-san is definitely a swordswoman, so one would be a swordswoman and the other a magician huh.

I don’t know if they are related by blood, but those two would be able to team up as vanguard and rear.

“...Okay, open!” (Sari)

As if acting in concert to Sari’s words, a part of the swaying space was cut open.

It is small, but we can somehow pass through.

At the other side, it isn’t distorted and the same landscape is seen.

“Well done, Sari.” (Lucia)

“This much is obvious.” (Sari)

It is a pleasant conversation between sisters.

Then, let’s quickly cross.

“It is a bit narrow. Let’s widen it.” (Shiki)

“Waka-sama, enter from here.” (Mio)

I was thinking about continuing, but two voices reach my ears.

There was no need to say, it was Shiki and Mio.

Shiki instantly expands the opening that Sari-san had opened.

Mio’s hand had shot darkness, eroding the distortion of space, and made an entrance that was a lot bigger than Shiki’s.

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

Lucia-san and Sari were silent.

They were silent, but it was a silence that said a lot.

“Shiki, I have already created a path for Waka-sama to take, so you can use that one with the other girls.” (Mio) “Since they went through the trouble of opening it already, we should use...No, it doesn’t seem like we will be appearing at a different location anyways, so there should be no problem in having two openings.” (Shiki) Shiki complies in an instant.

“Now now, the objective is to confirm the situation of the temple, so let’s get along.” (Makoto) My words felt somewhat futile.

...By the way, I entered from the opening that Mio made.

Chapter 189: Mad festival temple

“This is most likely a racket from the Spirits.”

“It feels like they are in a drunken state.”

“How annoying-desu.”

Those were our impressions.

After entering the distorted space, the inside didn't seem to have any sort of mamono, or signs of demons trembling.

But in place of that, there's Fire and Earth Spirits making a racket in madness.

It would be one thing if it were people with no power doing a racket, but when Spirits that are practically a mass of element, are doing this, it isn't safe.

Stone, metal, and solid objects were dancing boisterously in the sky, and as if enveloping all of it, there's a multicolored flame rampaging flashily as if creating a piece of art.

There were faint shapes of red and yellow lights shaped as humans; low Spirits that had no will appeared and disappeared.

There's also a large sized lizard with fire clad on its body and moving rapidly.

A small one that looks like a kid, carrying a hammer in one hand and smashing it here and there.

I think those ones are Medium Spirits.

It seems they possess a will and sometimes they don't.

...All the ones here don't look sane, so it might be hard to classify them though.

“Why are you so carefree?!” (Lucia)

“There's clearly an abnormality occurring in the temple. We have to hurry inside, to the grand altar.” (Sari) Lucia-san and Sari were quite

serious when dealing with the Spirits.

While wiping away the attacks that come from all directions, we proceed at walking speed.

We are following behind those girls and advancing along with them.

...Well, they did say they would protect us after all.

In truth, the attacks that come from the back and attacks that obstruct our advance were being rendered useless by Shiki and Mio, but even I can tell that it is not necessary to tell them this.

“Uhm, at this pace, not only are we not going to make it inside the temple, but I feel like we would end up passing the night at the stairs though.” (Makoto) Just in case, I try asking about the current pace.

The closer we get, the movements of the Spirits grow more vigorous.

At the very least, this is what I can guess from what I have seen with [Sakai] and looking at how the situation has progressed.

Seems like Lucia-san doesn't have the cheat-like regeneration of Io, and can't ignore the damage.

Sari has magic that can adapt to the situation and her magic power is also abundant, but she has way too many counterattacks that she is losing the initiative.

I am beginning to think that it really would have been better to return once.

If they call the Demon Generals, or properly group up the army, they might be able to deal with this.

“With these nonstop attacks, it can't be helped! I have a few plans in mind, wait for a bit!” (Lucia) Lucia-san doesn't have any breathing room.

I was shouted.

If I remember correctly, Reft was a master at counterattacking, wasn't he?

She succeeded the ability of Io to find out the weak points of its

opponent, and she probably learned the techniques for what to do after finding them out from Reft.

I think it is a type with good balance.

If she were to succeed Io's fighting style at its whole, it would be necessary to have that defensive power and regeneration after all.

That's a cheat.

It cannot be completely copied, but it can be damped down. I should note down that there are those type of people as well.

"Anesama, this is difficult. I did try thinking of ways as well, but I ended up with the conclusion that retreating would be best." (Sari) Sari is pretty composed.

Well, even when she used a big attack once, the wave would resume its movements, so not only is it exhausting, it is also disadvantageous.

If we don't increase our speed more than this, it will become gradually worse.

Even I can tell that.

"Then let's retreat. The situation is worse than expected. Now that we have things to report, don't you think you have accomplished your part plenty enough?"

"...Just that, there's no breathing room to create an exit for retreat." (Sari) Arara, the opening that we used to enter has already closed, and if we return there, we would need Sari to concentrate again which would be pretty difficult.

"Can't be helped then. We will return to the entrance, and have one of my people open it again, so Lucia-san, Sari-san, don't push yourself." (Makoto) "You are!! saying it!! as if it is easy!!" (Lucia)

It seems they still have stamina, but who knows how much Lucia-san's spirit will be able to last.

How to say it, she is level-headed, but as expected, she still has a 'childish' part. I am relieved.

“Don’t compare us to you chicks. Something like this wouldn’t even serve as warm-up. Stepping back or advancing wouldn’t be of any difficulty.” (Mio) “...So you say. Then I would definitely want to gaze on that power of yours! But, it will be to advance!” (Lucia) Advance, she says?

Does she have a strong sense of responsibility? Or is this also a scheme of the Demon Lord?

In the first place, I feel like he is also involved in this abnormal situation.

“Raidou-dono, if possible, I would want to witness that power as well. If you have power that won’t make any difference in advance or retreat, I would like to learn from it.” (Sari) “Even if you say learn, it would go against what you two proposed, won’t it? If you order us at your own convenience, it would only trouble Waka-sama and us.” (Shiki) “Shiki-dono, I admit that my foresight was naive. But in this kind of situation, I am even more preoccupied for the safety of the people inside the temple that serve the Spirits. Anesama and I want to confirm that they are still alive and protect them, please. Of course, we will be reporting this to his Majesty, and will definitely repay you for it.” (Sari) Wounded people huh.

Truth is, I have noticed life signs of what seem to be demons.

...And places where there were signs of life.

“Fumu, you who are one of the next era that will be shouldering the demon race, is going so far to depend on someone else?” (Shiki) “...”

Sari went silent.

At this rate, there’s most likely a more powerful Spirit rampaging inside the temples and it will turn into a bigger chaos, so it would be easier to just return once and have them deal with it.

Ah, no good, this is demon territory, so it would be bad to have them think we are doing whatever we want huh.

That Demon Lord-sama does seem like a person I can’t drop my guard from after all.

“Waka-sama, I think that in this occasion, it would be good to have them

owe us one.” (Shiki) “Isn’t that fine?” (Makoto)

“Waka-sama is being too indulgent towards the demon’s wishes. Shiki, you too-desu yo.” (Mio) “Don’t say that Mio. You want to return by lunch, right?” (Makoto) “That’s...true, but...” (Mio)

“Then endure it for a bit. It seems like we will be able to learn the cause if we reach the grand altar of the temple after all.” (Makoto) “...Fuh~, you two there, step back. Shift-desu.” (Mio)

Mio opens her folding fan and steps forward along with Shiki.

At the front there’s Mio and Shiki; at the very middle there’s me; at the rear there’s Lucia-san and Sari.

...Eh?

I am at the position that’s tasked to protect the demons?!

Oow.

“Let’s see what you have, Raidou-dono. The power that father has recognized. I will be looking forward to seeing your followers’ as well.” (Lucia) It seems like Lucia-san completely hates us now.

“I am sorry that this has happened after speaking all big. Raidou-dono, at the very least, we will protect you.” (Sari) “No, now that it has come to this, don’t mind it. There’s a number of people that are still fine, so it would be better to think about how you will protect them.” (Makoto) It is fine to just wrap them in the Magic Armor.

If they ask me about it, I will just answer that it is a barrier.

“?! You are able to tell the location of the people that are safe?!”

“Raidou-dono!”

“Before heading to the temple, let’s go around those places first. There’s 4 places. Mio, Shiki, you know the places, right?” (Makoto) “Yes, we will be going in order-desu wa. But it is not something that requires Waka-sama to go as well.” (Mio) “Just like Mio says, please wait at the stairs over there. We will go gather them.” (Shiki) “I see. Then, I am counting on you. I will be waiting.” (Makoto)

I look at the stairs that are several hundred meters long.

I could tell that Lucia-san and Sari who were behind me, were startled.

Instead of going one by one in order and end up having a few of them die, it would be best to leave it to Mio and Shiki.

“Well then, I will be making this place a bit more silent-desu wa. Shiki, you do the rest.” (Mio) “Leave it to me.” (Shiki)

Mio spreads out what looked like a spider’s web in a wide range with her as the center.

She didn’t say anything, she had her eyes closed in silence.

That’s a Mio style aria.

She looks like she is not doing anything and then a big move suddenly comes flying.

Shiki looks at Mio’s state, and seems to have begun doing an aria.

Orange lights that looked like grains of sand appeared at the surroundings, and began dispersing.

If you don’t pay attention to it, you would lose sight of it; the domain of Shiki.

“Then, let’s go. I will go at a light running pace, so please follow behind me.” (Makoto) “No wait, light running you say, Raidou-dono? Just how will you...” (Lucia) “You will understand soon. Ah, see.” (Makoto)

The still bewildered Lucia-san points at the Fire and Earth Spirits that are still running wildly.

I sensed the action of Mio’s power and answer her.

Pachin

The special move of Mio made a nice sound at the end.

In a moment, a shaking that resembled that of an earthquake occurred over the whole place.

It only shook heavily once.

Then, it turned silent.

For us, it was only that.

Just that, for the Spirits, it was...

“There were some left huh. They are all weaklings, so they aren’t that tasty, but to the rude ones that go mad in front of Waka-sama without knowing their place, this much is obvious-desu wa ne.” (Mio) botoboto

At the place that had turned silent, a sound like that resonates, and fire and mineral begin to fall to the ground one after the other.

Counting the lizard and the kid; they all had a big wound as if a mouth had crunched a piece of their body. They fell down and were continuously corroded by darkness until they disappeared.

There were some Spirits that were still moving on the ground, and some that still had the strength to fly into the sky but...

“Well then, I will take care of the remaining ones.” (Shiki)

Shiki hits the ground with his black staff.

It is quite a standard action he does when activating a spell.

That kind of choice action actually increases the power of the spell, so it can’t be underestimated. And in Shiki’s case, that’s exactly what it is.

By the way, the aria was: ‘Turn earth into dust to the wind, turn fire into ash by water’, so differing from Mio, Shiki must have formed a spell that deals with the Spirits depending on their element.

“Ah.” (Sari)

Sari’s words, no, her dumbfounded voice was like a signal. The remaining Spirits froze and turned into dust, tore up and disappeared.

Nicely done.

“Well then, we will be back soon.”

Mio and Shiki bow once and head to opposing directions.

“Now then, that’s how it is, so let’s hurry as well. They were wiped out,

but with how things are going, more are probably going to appear soon.”
(Makoto) “...”

“...”

Eh, the two of them look weird like the time when we were entering here.

I think a Demon General class would be able to do this much though.

Io would be able to enter the temple without caring about damage after all.



The inside of the temple had turned into a maze as if they were trying to harass us. Damn it.

I hate this kind of things.

And while at it, I honestly don't like going to damp and humid caves.

My limit is limestone caves that have been made into sightseeing spots.

There's this side of me that's attracted to mysterious places, but when thinking about the level of humidity, temperature, water veins; I just don't feel caves.

This world is orthodox, but it is good that I didn't end up having to go underground.

In other words, right now it is pretty bitter.

“Can't we just put a mark on it and go loose?” (Makoto) <this sounds so Mio, I almost mistook it> “I think we are almost there, so please endure a bit more.” (Shiki) There's two High Spirits. I can tell they are there.

I voiced out my desire to just blow everything up and make a straight line directly to them, but Shiki reacted to it.

...I can't huh.

“Waka-sama, it is okay if we just do it secretly-desu wa. Let's do it.”
(Mio) “You are totally letting the idea out. Shiki hears it as well. It is not a secret anymore.” (Makoto) “Shiki is fine-desu. I will make it as if he didn't

hear anything.” (Mio) “Mio-dono, no matter the case, that’s just way too excessive. Our objective is to investigate the abnormality of the Spirit temple, so please restrain from doing anything forceful.” (Shiki) It seems like even Shiki has something to say about Mio’s forcefulness this time around.

Hm?

(Anesama, this is real. The Kuzunoha Company has military power at the level of a large country, with only the three people here. Not only that, even when we are in a situation where we might end up in a problem with the High Spirits, they don’t have any sense of danger.) (Sari) (I understand. But Sari, we still don’t know if Raidou himself is strong.) (Lucia) (I don’t think two people this strong would decide on a master because of blood or political power. Just like what father warned, Raidou is not an opponent we want facing us. I have reached that conclusion as well.) (Sari) I thought they were silent, but it seems they were doing thought transmission huh.

I expanded [Sakai] to confirm the location of the High Spirits and coincidentally heard them.

We already finished analyzing the one Rona was using, so something like listening in is possible.

It is good that I have a habit of checking thought transmissions when I spread out [Sakai].

...No well, intercepting is bad huh.

But in the information war, the one who has been peeked is at fault.

Rona thinks that way as well, so that’s why she made a secure thought transmission.

Yeah, let’s leave aside my guilt.

(...In that case, even if this situation was created by an idiot that wants to oppose father, or if this was set up by father himself, or even if this was for a totally different reason; it was an incident that had worth for us huh.) (Lucia) (I don’t think this is something father set up though. Maybe to

gauge the power of Raidou, he went through the trouble of leaving it to us and didn't act himself.) (Sari) (By using the High Spirits, and even putting our own lives in danger?) (Lucia) (Leaving aside the Spirits, he most likely believed that Anesama and I would be able to gauge Raidou's power and tendency even if it's a bit.) (Sari) (...Right, no matter what it is, the chances of us being chosen as Demon Lord is low. Even if we have the power, for women...there's other uses.) (Lucia) (To support the demon race, we are destined to marry someone of influence or another demi-human to maintain political stability and to create good relationships.) (Sari) (Yeah. It is not like we didn't have queens, but there weren't many. Ani<Brother> is especially good in politics so...Sari, you also think like that as well huh.) (Lucia) It seems like they are doing quite a heavy thought transmission.

We were able to recover around 10 survivors, but there's no more survivors.

Everyone has a barrier placed on them and are now safe, and that must have lowered the guard of those two.

They probably think that there's no way there will be a fight against a High Spirit.

At the very least, these two girls don't have the power to fight against a Superior Dragon or a High Spirit after all.

(Raidou, if he has that much power, all his conduct up til now has been fake. It would be plausible to assume that he has carefully laid out a plan before making contact with us.) (Lucia) Lucia-san is really cautious of me.

...It is true that I was faking, but it is probably a different fake from what Lucia-san is thinking about.

It is shameful though.

(Now then, I don't know about that, but we might need to prepare ourselves.) (Sari) (The reason why we were tasked to be his guides today was most likely because of what Raidou answered to father's question of marriage, right Sari?) (Lucia) Baha!!

M-Marriage?!

(I am still on hold, and Anesama has completely rejected it, right?) (Sari)
On hold...

On...Hold?

Means that she can't decide yet.

Not a rejection.

Not a rejection?!

Are you serious?

But as expected, it is impossible with a little girl.

Ethically impossible.

Even in 2d games, those were routes I normally avoided. <He is talking about Eroges. No need to explain.> And in truth, even if I try to imagine it...yeah, it is impossible.

(If you don't have the intention of becoming a bride, then at least take the job of gathering information. If anything happens, become the shield of Raidou and die; better the impression he has of the demon race. Is what he is trying to tell us huh.) (Lucia) (Or it might that he is telling us to witness his power and reconsider our decision.) (Sari) (Fuh...true.

Honestly speaking, he is outside the boundaries of common sense. I could tell that I wouldn't be able to win even if he is handstanding. No, I knew it already. Without even making a single stance, he disappeared without leaving a shadow behind. But his attitude of making light of his own power is just...) (Lucia) (I feel like it is a bit different from making light of his own power. He felt like a normal person that has obtained a large power.) (Sari) (In that case, he is even more dangerous. If a person exerts this much power with a notion as if it's his everyday life, it would be a disaster.) (Lucia) (Yeah, that's why it is necessary; an existence that makes sure Raidou doesn't point that power at the demon race.) (Sari) (...So you are saying that's you or me? But...thinking of age and looks, unless Raidou has quite a peculiar sexual preference, it would end up being me.) (Lucia) I don't have such sexual preference!!

...Hm, eh, could this reaction be...

(Anesama, you are the person that will be shouldering the army's next era. If possible, helping me out would make things work better.) (Sari) (Sari also has diplomacy and information administration for the future. You must shine bright at the side of Rona or it would be troubling. Compared to that, Io and Reft -my mentors-have no distress with their army. If I were to be used as a political tool with my title as princess for decoration, it wouldn't be so bad for that engagement to be with a person that has a power comparable to that of an Overlord.) (Lucia) It's coming!

I turn my concentration to the response that was coming at high speed.

"Mio, Shiki! It seems they are the ones coming to receive us." (Makoto)
"Ara, it saved the trouble of having Shiki shut up." (Mio)

"Oh...but the grand altar should be a bigger place, so it would make things easier if it were there though." (Shiki) I see.

In that case...

"Then, I know the way there, so let's push it back. I will do it." (Makoto)
I kind of know the path that it has taken.

This one is the temple of the Earth Spirit, so I think the one coming is the Earth High Spirit.

Well, it doesn't matter whoever it is.

"I can do that though." (Mio)

"It seems like it is quite big, so I leave Lucia-san and Sari-san in your care." (Makoto) It is pretty big.

It might be twice as big as Mio in the time when she was a spider.

Like the size of one of the biggest trucks. <Is it truck-sama?! Truck-sama is being used as measurement.> I haven't seen its appearance, but with this size, there should be no mistake.

"It will be breaking the wall around there. Wait, a cow?!" (Makoto) Big!!

No, I was expecting it but, a cow?!

Confirming our figures, it began to kick its rear legs.

Even its movements are cow-like.

But...there's several places that differ.

The closest resemblance is that of a cow, but it has a mane, and instead of hooves, it has terrifying nails; it even has long fangs like those of a Saber Tiger.

Its whole skin is black, lustrous, and looks like it is hard; what looks like a cow is its thick and sharp horns.

Its eyes shine fiercely, and I can't feel like it is sane.

Even a High Spirit is in this state.

Every single one that has come out has been people I can't speak to!

...

Its eyes shone brighter.

Geh!

"Mio, erase it!" (Makoto)

"Yes!" (Mio)

I didn't need to confirm if she can do it or not.

Well, Shiki also moved in creating more layers of barriers.

I am happy to be blessed with reliable subordinates.

The floor and walls changed to black and sharp stalagmites grew out of it.

When Mio closed her folding fan and touched one of the many, everything scattered.

Barely made it in time!

As expected of Mio. <Mio nullified a spell of the cow>

"Shiki, be the rearguard and protect those two. Mio, if it tries to do anything after, erase it before activation!" (Makoto) "As you wish." (Shiki)

“Please leave it to me, Waka-sama.” (Mio)

My orders narrowly make it in time.

The High Spirit lowered its head slightly like the gesture before a bullfight, its sharp horn undulated like a living being, and it stretches to my direction as it distorts.

Uoh, cool.

Is that a conversion spell? Wait, it is rushing!

But if it's a contest of strength, there's no problem.

Let's dosukoi our way to the grand altar then!

“Wa, do you intend to take on that?!” (Lucia)

“Reckless...” (Sari)

Ignoring the voice of the two girls, I answer the incoming cow(temporary) with my own rush.

I activate Magic Armor and stop a bit before crashing with that fellow.

And then, the tip of the sharp horns that were charging at me...I grab them with both of its arms!

The giant cow that had charged at me while accelerating, trembled at my front and stopped.

“No way, it is that big, you know? That's impossible.” (Lucia)

“Without forming a single spell, he stopped its movements...” (Sari)

“Now then, High Spirit-dono, I will have you return to your room!”
(Makoto) I try advancing.

Tch, as expected of four feet.

It is giving a fight.

But this is the same as tug of war.

If the balance is broken, what comes next is to go all out.

“It stopped moving. No, it is bit by bit, but he is pushing it back.” (Lucia)

“Ah, could it be the magic power materialization that Rona had reported

about? A body made of solidified magic power. Even when it is in an invisible state, it still has that much power?” (Sari) Maybe it doesn’t like having its horns grabbed, the giant cow shakes its head in dislike.

But I won’t let go.

I push without caring.

It is beginning to crumble.

In that case, what comes next is just to change gears.

I still have a lot of leeway left.

Okay!

“Mio, Shiki, Lucia-san, Sari-san; I will be pushing all in one go. Please follow me till the grand altar.” (Makoto) I gather strength in my legs.

No matter how much it tries to move its head, no matter how much it kicks the ground and puts momentum, it is already a corpse that is being steadily pushed back.

The moment that kind of agitation appeared in its eyes, I release the strength I gathered and push it back to where it came.

Slowly and steadily accelerating.

At the end, it was at a speed equal to that of its charge.

I have done a Yorikiri to the grand altar. <A sumo technique of pushing the opponent straight out of the ring.> A sense of accomplishment envelops my body.

“YORIKIRI! Just kidding. If Tomoe were here, she might have been delighted by it.” (Makoto) “True. It was truly splendid.” (Shiki)

“Even if you say wide, it isn’t that wide-desu wa ne. It might be a bit small to end this.” (Mio) In contrast to us who are celebrating, the two demons have reached zero in their word count.

They might be talking in thought transmission, but right now we are in the middle of a fight, so I won’t peek.

The giant cow gets up, and as usual, glares at me and tries to do

something.

But Mio has been nullifying them, so nothing activates.

“Okay. Shiki, investigate. I will be protecting Lucia-san and the others, so Mio, go calm down that High Spirit for a bit. It seems to be riled up after all.” (Makoto) “Understood.” (Shiki)

“Understood. But Waka-sama, it should be okay to kill it, right?” (Mio)
“No, definitely not. Leave it only to restraining.” (Makoto)

“...I wanted you to say: ‘I don’t mind’, at that part-desu.” (Mio)

Like hell I would say that!

It is a Spirit, you know?

It is a High Spirit, so it is probably incredible, you know?

I can tell that it would be bad to decide before properly hearing what it has to say.

It would be troublesome if it was ordered by the Goddess, after all.

Not that I think about it, she has been really quiet lately.

What kind of scolding and limitation did Susanoo-sama and his group give her?

...Just thinking about it scares me.

Even Athena-sama who looked like the weakest of the group, moved that gallantly and was so strong.

In the end, that lady battered me to the point of being unable to move; in a suit.

Gods are seriously scary.

Except the bug.

“Wa-Waka-sama!” (Shiki)

“Shiki, what’s up?” (Makoto)

“There’s also one coming from the side!” (Shiki)

Side?

“Even the Fire High Spirit?!” (Lucia)

Ah, Lucia-san spoke.

“Not only Behemoth, but even Phoenix...at this rate, the capital might turn into ashes. At the very least, I thought that the High Spirits had not gone mad and it was only a distortion, so I thought that we would be able to deal with it ourselves.” (Sari) Sari also spoke.

Ah, this is Behemoth huh.

Calling you a giant cow; I am very sorry.

But I see, Phoenix huh.

Not having to do one other dungeon like this, is...lucky.

I only got an explanation that they were High Spirits but there were no details, so now that I know their names, I feel better.

“How lucky, right? Then, Shiki will take care of Phoenix—” (Makoto)

“Shiki, you take care of that cow. I will go for the bird.” (Mio)

“Mio.” (Makoto)

Mio’s sudden intervention.

What about dealing with the cow-I mean, Behemoth?

Ah, some sort of black web disappeared.

It only made it more angry.

It would only trouble Shiki to receive a baton pass at this moment.

“Ah, no. I actually think that it would be easier if Waka-sama and Mio-dono deal with it.” (Shiki) Ah, now that I think about it, Shiki did say that it was quite hard to fight against Lancer.

I do want him investigate this event, so maybe I should just deal with both of them.

“I am more in the mood of bird than cow-desu. Okay, let’s change~” (Mio) “It’s fine, Shiki. I will be dealing with bo—” (Makoto)

“Shiki, isn’t this a good chance to do our best? Or are you...trying to push all the trouble to Waka-sama? How about losing one layer of skin?” (Mio)
“?!!” (Shiki)

“No, I want Shiki to investigate the reason—” (Makoto)

“Waka-sama, can you please leave it to me? An Earth High Spirit; not a bad opponent to have! Please let me!” (Shiki) I can’t speak till the end!

If you want to do it, well, I can leave it though.

I can just help out if anything happens anyways.

Well then, just as planned, I will be protecting Lucia-san and the others.

“That’s how it should be-desu. Quickly get on our level. Well then Waka-sama, I will be eating the bird that is cooking itself-I mean, calm it down. Anyways, I will be back.” (Mio) ...

I am uneasy.



Immediately after the fight began, I -Sari-, was simply looking at the way Raidou and Kuzunoha Company fought.

I soon discovered that things like Demon General, or father; those kind of measurements weren’t enough to gauge these people.

In the first place, people that can take on the Fire and Earth High Spirits alone, is something that’s already out of my comprehension.

Power that I can imagine in my mind, and power that I can tell in real life is simply different.

This is exactly what’s happening.

A while back, we had an adventurer called Sofia that was together with the demon race.

She was also someone that was hard to grasp its power.

It seems she fought against Superior Dragons with few people and was able to win, but in my eyes, she would be around the level of Io using his trump card.

I am mostly in the information department, but Lucia-anesama, is more experienced in seeing through the strength of other people, and even she doesn't know of Raidou's strength, so I thought that maybe he was dragged by his own strength.

“Hey hey, your movements are dull-desu yo, bird!” (Mio)

The black haired girl, Mio, moves around in mid-air as if sliding, and rampages in the sky with Phoenix as her opponent.

The other one, Shiki, was dealing with Behemoth on the ground as if it were easy.

Phoenix's alias is 'immortal'. Leaving aside if it's actually true or not, it seems it has regenerative ability that surpasses that of Demon General Io.

And in truth, it has received the full special move of Mio and has had its wings broken several times, and yet, it is instantly regenerating them. But observing the situation, it is just as Mio pointed out; its movements were growing dull.

If that means it is getting weaker, it would mean that Mio is overwhelming a High Spirit.

Phoenix who father told me has a peaceful attitude, is acting in a violent way that totally differs from what I have been told, but it is without doubt a High Spirit.

No matter what living being it is, it is not something an individual should be able to fight against.

“So this doesn't work either! To think that just by being earth element it makes this so much more difficult to deal with!” (Shiki) Shiki's words were given out the moment his magic was dispersed at the vicinity of Behemoth.

In a sense, this side surprises me more than Mio.

Behemoth is an Earth High Spirit.

Just like Shiki says, it is the peak of all that's related to the Earth element.

From Rona's report, the origins of Shiki is that of the Lich, Larva, she knew of. A Lich is the highest point of an undead, but an undead is an Earth element existence. In other words, there's no undead that should be able to go against Behemoth.

Even if he were to make an army, it would all change into mud with a single roar, so even if it's a sword or magic, there's no way he would be able to harm its body.

And yet, even if its power is being mitigated by a lot, a few of the spells are reaching, and wounding it.

It can be said that this is a battle that completely overthrows my common sense.

As someone that studies magic, his fight is unbelievable.

"13th steps! From 1st to 4th steps, release. 'Wand', 'Sword', 'Cup', 'Coin'." (Shiki) ?!

Shiki's power swelled up.

And it was as if his very existence had been strengthened, a really thick power activation.

There were four words.

In other words, he did four types of enhancements at once?

That kind of strong spell with such a short aria...

Not only Shiki; all three from the Kuzunoha Company have an abnormal speed in their aria.

Even if only a part of that technique is in the hands of the demon race, we would be able to widen and create more tactics in battle, I am sure of it.

They are doing all of this as if it were natural.

At some point in time, Shiki was now wearing four rings.

4.

So that means, it must be the result of his spell.

“7th step, ‘Hell’, release, and activation! ‘Mist Temple Nivlheim’, devour that fellow entirely–?!!” (Shiki) The moment a massive amount of power gathered to Shiki and was about to be released, Behemoth changed the form of its horns, and from 2 it was put together to make 1.

Its eyes shine.

The ring from Shiki’s pinky finger produced light, but it broke as it shone and disappeared.

It was probably the spell failing.

Or maybe a misfire caused by intervention.

“Arara, looking at how it broke, you will not be able to use it for a while. Even though it is moving by instinct, that Spirit could tell that it was dangerous.” (Raidou) It’s Raidou.

I see Shiki as quite dangerous, but as always, I can’t sense any sort of danger from Raidou.

Since the moment we entered the maddened Spirit domain, the only moment he showed a displeased face was when he saw that the temple had turned into a maze.

“For a meat bullet, the things you do are unexpectedly complex! You are able to properly destroy spells in its entirety after all!!” (Shiki) While saying this, Shiki lunges towards Behemoth.

Shiki who is clearly a magician, was going to enter a close combat battle. No matter how I see it, that’s reckless.

Raidou’s spell is a special case.

There should be no other magician in this world that can do something like him.

I can say for sure.

“Ascalon!” (Shiki)

The short aria of Shiki seems to have completed without being eliminated; the cane in his hands changed into a greatsword.

Holding the sword in an untrained fashion, he hits the horn of Behemoth.

The black sword makes a shrilling noise.

But Shiki was laughing.

“6th Step, ‘Fray’, release. ‘Sword Emperor Spirit Possession’” (Shiki)
Shiki’s moves changed in an instant.

It became the movements of a wild, violent, and instinctive natural-born fighter.

...This is crazy.

What was the first attack then?

But the Shiki from then on showed an overwhelming swordsmanship that made Lucia-anesama who was beside me lose all words.

With this switch, Shiki’s attacks were steadily wounding Behemoth.

Even so, it is not on the level of Phoenix, but it also has regenerative power.

The regeneration acts faster, and at this rate, Shiki will only be losing stamina.

...Shiki doesn’t seem to be the type that fights with instinct, so yhe probably has some plan in mind.

His fighting style comes from tactics.

It is in essence the same as me, so I can somewhat tell.

That sword technique is an instinctive style, so there’s the chance that Shiki has become desperate and has betted on his best style.

At times I can see calmness in those eyes, so I don’t think he has become desperate though.

“I can’t use rings with spell formations, but how about this!” (Shiki)
Legs, fangs, horn, and also around its body; all of them did attacks that would bring instant death.

And it did it practically effortlessly.

Shiki somehow evaded it and continued his attacks.

...

This is strange.

The number of rings Shiki has are different from the number he has announced.

Even though one should have been destroyed, the numbers are...

Kaki~~n

...

Shiki's black sword was inserted into the horn of Behemoth.

It was in a shape as if entangling it.

This is bad!

I look at Raidou.

He doesn't intend to move?!

The hard and sharp horn moves like a tentacle. <Obligatory (͡° ͜ʖ ͡°)> How troublesome!

Behemoth opens its mouth big, and fangs that didn't lose in sharpness devour Shiki.

"8th Step, [Ragnarok], release" (Shiki)

By the time Shiki muttered that, a part of his body had already been minced.

Uh.

Why...Why is Raidou so calm in front of the peril of his comrade!

From my judgment, you would never act this way towards people that you consider your relatives.

"It is over huh. But it was dangerous. If he hadn't used [Gemini] first, there was the chance of a simultaneous defeat." (Makoto) Eh?

“First Chain, Raging.” (Shiki)

That voice was heard from the side of Behemoth.

“Well, it was groundwork for the limitation of the ring that desires the heart’s blood, so steady training is truly what saves you in your everyday life. Good work, Shiki.” (Makoto) Ah, Shiki is there.

But, the one that was eaten just now...

When I return my gaze, there was a clay doll.

And Shiki who chanted First Chain, as if responding to those words, chains wrapped around the body of Behemoth.

A spell that seals movement?

Just how many prohibited, cursed, and powerful spells does Shiki know of?

From what I have heard of Rona, he is supposed to be Larva, but even from my eyes, I can feel that Shiki is several steps higher than Rona.

The Larva that Rona knows of is already in the past.

It might not serve of much reference.

“Shiki, you can’t slacken! You will be crushed!”

“Tch!! Second Chain, [Mud Sea]! Third Chain [Gleipnir]!” (Shiki)

Behemoth had chains wrapped on all its body.

Those chains were coming out from midair, and its end can’t be seen.

Not only physically, it seemed like it was using some sort of special power, as Behemoth didn’t rampage anymore.

“Hah...Hah...” (Shiki)

“Good work. To activate 9th Step [Gemini] and 8th Step at the same time, that’s impressive.” (Makoto) “...No, it was a struggle. I was unable to use anything with spell formations even if it were the rings.” (Shiki) “No, it was impressive. When the other opponent is superior in the same element as you, it becomes that much harder huh. I thought about lending

a hand if it turned dangerous, but it is great that it ended without needing it.” (Makoto) There were no signs of him trying to help.

Raidou knew that Shiki would be able to suppress Behemoth.

Also, after the battle, Raidou was somewhat different from how he has been until.

The sense of stability from being beside him.

Just like how Lucia-anesama says, could this be Raidou’s true self?

“The activation of ten onwards is still unstable, so I will be devoting myself with my all.” (Shiki) “Right now you should rest. It seems Mio’s side will be finishing soon, so when things get calm, I am counting on you for the investigation.” (Makoto) Mio.

Right. Because it was more silent there, I wasn’t watching it much.

“As expected of Mio-dono.” (Shiki)

“It will be decided with this. That Phoenix, I was watching, and it seems it can use attacks with its wings. It scatters by flapping its fire wings you see. And then, see, it rains down at one location in high speed. Mio has been guarding it all until now with her network barrier, but this time...” (Makoto) Just as Raidou commented, the flapping of Phoenix dispersed several thousand feathers, and they stopped in midair and increased in brightness.

Is she...guarding this the whole time with her barrier?

I can surely tell that I would only be able to stop one of those by giving it my all.

And to escape unscathed after, I can’t say for sure.

An intense light was emitted.

A terrifying amount of attacks rained down on Mio and us!!

“Slant them.”

“All of them towards herself huh. I have a few bad memories from that.”

Bad memories he says.

Just how miserable of a memory was that.

As Raidou and Shiki said, all the attacks that rained down changed directions and were headed to where Mio is, and then, all the thousand attacks hit Mio.

And yet, Mio's figure was maintained.

Even though it was an attack that should burn you and leave nothing behind.

"I will give it a taste and return it." (Mio)

Mio's words.

And then, Phoenix's cry.

Its wings, no, its whole body was being burned with a black fire.

...A type of counter-magic?

Demon General Reft also does something similar, but he wouldn't do something like having all attacks concentrated at him.

Mio returned from above ground as if sliding, and Phoenix followed right after by dropping while squirming. It was still wrapped in the black fire.

Glancing at Phoenix who had almost nothing remaining, Mio makes a bow to Raidou.

Mio was in front of us after returning.

I unconsciously gulped down.

There were remains of several attacks she had received.

As I thought, all the attacks had hit Mio.

Aside from those, there's also several other attacks.

The cloth clothing she has doesn't look that tough, but there are parts that are slightly loose, and yet, there's nothing ripped that stands out.

Maybe she has an overwhelming defensive power, or it might be she is combat oriented.

She is completely opposite of Reft who trained his counter because he knew of his self's low defensive power.

“Good work, Mio. Shiki also did his best so, about the investigation, can you help Shiki out as his assistant?” (Makoto) “If you go with me to eat bird later.” (Mio)

“Yeah, that's fine. I am being showed around, so let's go together.” (Makoto) “I am looking forward to it-desu! Now then Shiki! Don't look from afar and let's finish this fast. We will be going to have a light meal with Waka-sama after all!” (Mio) Ah.

This degree is maybe on an everyday standard for them.

That's why they are not flustered.

They don't even hold any sense of danger.

It is hard to believe, and I probably won't be able to believe it right now, but even if the demon race fights wholly against Raidou, he probably would make a slightly more troubled face than now as he does preparations.

And the demons are...the worst existence.

The Goddess and the powers that follow her are wandering all over the world.

It should be safe to assume this.

I feel like I have now understood a bit of why father is showing such hospitality to Raidou.

He wants to cooperate with him, obtain benefits.

It is simply a matter of steps.

The most important reason is that we don't want them turning hostile on us.

If we have him as an enemy, the demon race won't be able to make a single plan or strategy, and won't be able to deal with it.

Even if we have to kill our hatred and deepest wishes, we currently have

to shake hands with him no matter what.

I clearly understood this.

And also, the path that I should take.

Not that of being a Demon Lord or being a Queen; I now see a path that only I can choose.

There's no complains in this life of being treated as the child of the Demon Lord, and treated well by everyone.

My heart and body don't belong to me.

By the time the Spirit Temple returned to normal, I engrave the sight of the capital that I might not be able to see anymore as we go back.

Chapter 190: A generous(?) reward

“...This is the diagnosis of this time’s abnormality of the Spirit temple from the Kuzunoha Company. I who was in that place, think that it is safe to assume that there was no lie in their words.”

“Hm, a warped power that made even High Spirits intoxicated had occurred at the altar huh. This is clearly the act of someone.”

“Yes. As Shiki-dono said, it seems a catalyst that dissolves into the air was used, and it is some sort of strong ritual magic that lasts for several days. The crime was probably done...by someone from a power that’s hostile to his Majesty.”

“No doubt. In the first place, there’s no mobilization party from the hyuman side in this capital, and there were no unusual movements from the organizations and the temple of the Goddess. In that case, this one can only think that this was an inside job.” (Zef) At that time when the night was soon and waiting for the banquet; the Demon Lord Zef, m several civil officials, his close aides the Demon General Io and Rona were there as well and hearing the report.

The ones reporting were two of the Demon Lord’s children.

Lucia and Sari.

They were guiding the Kuzunoha Company party to the Spirit temple, and were involved in an incident. The two were witness of the whole incident and had returned to the castle.

They have just finished reporting the details of it.

Sari responded to all the questions Zef did without hesitation, and Zef affirmed the answers of Sari as if he already knew the one pulling the strings beforehand.

“But two High Spirits were unable to wound Raidou once huh. So being called Devil isn’t just for show or a bluff. From what this one has heard, one of his attacks killed around 4 digits of common soldiers. Seriously, this one wished that was only excessive rumors. But to look at it exaggeratedly

and realize that it was even higher than that..." (Zef) "...The power of those people rival that of a large country, no, if we are to take it more prudently, it would be safe to assume that they have enough to be a third power in this war. No matter how out of control they were, those three were able to cut through that garden of maddened Spirits with those refreshing faces, and suppressed Behemoth and Phoenix." (Sari) "If one follower of his is on the level of a High Spirit, we can't deny their uncommon power. But Rona, from your report, that person called Shiki was only on the level of being a powerful Lich, though?" (Zef) Zef's words were directed towards Rona who was at the side.

"Yes, it is certainly true that Shiki person is supposed to be possessed by Larva. In these several years, he hasn't made contact with us though. This is unbelievable. The Lich Larva should have already reached the limit of the power he could have. There's no way he would be able to defeat an Earth High Spirit no matter how strong he got. To go against Behemoth with the power of an undead is just...it would be like trying to extinguish a fire mountain with a torch. Something stupid and unbelievable. I can only call it reckless." (Rona) "There might have been moments when he barely made it out alive, but in the middle of it, Shiki-dono showed splendid swordsmanship and used several prohibited curse magic at the same time, as he dealt with Behemoth. Whether it is his close combat ability, or his powerful magic...I can't believe he is a Lich." (Lucia) Lucia who was silent until now, reacted to the words of confusion from Rona, and spoke of Shiki's fighting style.

"Sword...It gets further and further away from the image of Larva. It seems that the situation I had grasped was probably not the truth. I will be investigating Shiki once again." (Rona) "Umu. But do it in a peaceful manner. This one prohibits violent methods." (Zef) "Understood." (Rona)

"And Sari, what did the Spirit-donos say? They returned to their senses, right?" (Zef) "Yes. They said that they intended to test their abilities anyways, so it was convenient." (Sari) "What..." (Io)

Io makes a short mutter of amazement.

"Mio-dono scolded them severely at times, but the conversation mostly

proceeded in a calm manner.” (Sari) “Fumu. Well, they did seem to have an interest in them, so this one did think that there was a chance it would happen. And?” (Zef) Without touching the topic of Mio, Zef urges her to continue.

“In the end, they made a promise of giving them a call when they were in trouble; Phoenix promised to Mio-dono, and Behemoth to Shiki-dono.” (Sari) “Kuku, is that so. Seriously, it is steadily getting out of hand, that company.” (Zef) “It seems they spoke about some other topics afterwards, but we were told to check on the state of the survivors, and had no choice but to leave the place. We don’t know what conversation they had.” (Sari) “It’s fine. Now then, it seems our plans here have stabilized more.” (Zef) Zef had an expression as if confirming his thoughts.

Looking at this, Sari opens her eyes wide and speaks.

“Excuse my rudeness, but did his Majesty already notice the abnormality in the temple beforehand?” (Sari) “...Umu. No, it was only to the extent that this one had suspicions of it.” (Zef) “And the actions that Kuzunoha Company took as well?” (Sari) “This one thought that you would be able to drag them along and have them interfere with it.” (Zef) “...And their power as well?” (Sari)

“About that point, this one was expecting you two to bring out as much as you could. If the abnormality was to the level that this one thought of, this one was sure your group would be able to come back without any problems.” (Zef) “Raidou-dono, that man, in a precarious situation where they were dealing with Behemoth, and Phoenix had intruded, he said it was ‘lucky’. That it saved them the trouble of one more dungeon. Your Majesty! Did you feel that much power in Raidou-dono?!” (Sari) “...Fuh, ‘lucky’ huh. What scary words he says. No, this one didn’t think it would be to this extent. In the first place, this one didn’t think that the two High Spirits had gone mad as well. If this one knew the situation was to such extent, this one would have taken the army and subjugated it myself. This one had prepared for it as well. Right? Io and Rona.” (Zef) Io and Rona assent at Zef’s words.

Sari breathed out in relief.

“I see. We only considered them dangerous people, so I was bothered about how much your Majesty had understood of them. Please forgive my rudeness.” (Sari) “This one doesn’t think of it as rude. Don’t mind it. But the number one problem was as expected, the timing huh.” (Zef) “Timing?” (Sari)

“There’s only a limited amount of people that know the date and time that Kuzunoha Company would be visiting the temples. In that case, it means that the people that have used that information to push a coup d’etat, are people that are close to this one. A Spirit rampage that even involved the High Spirits, from the details of it, it wasn’t an incident caused impulsively. People that were able to pull it off as a plan, had grasped a relative amount of information, and were trying to involve the Kuzunoha Company; guests that this one had invited myself.” (Zef) “?!”

Tension ran through the place.

The words of the Demon Lord were said as if someone in that place ‘might’ be the one responsible.

“Good grief, this is a problem this one would like to resolve by spring. Even if it isn’t a situation on the level of Kuzunoha Company.” (Zef) “Your Majesty, as we have made our guests work this much, we also have to show some form of decency.” (Io) “This one knows, Io. Regarding that, Rona had already told Shiki to a certain level. Right, Rona?” (Zef) “Yes, I certainly did tell him. But wasn’t that supposed to be the reward for the friendly match?” (Rona) “We will put a bit more color to it, and give them something that’s one step higher. From what I have seen, Raidou was a person that feels debt towards this type of gestures. This one doesn’t know if Shiki will comply to it, but there’s no doubt that his words hold the most weight to Raidou. At least, if we were to convince him, there will be no problem.” (Zef) “That’s true.” (Rona)

“Even so, don’t do anything reckless. Maybe we should make it as if the state of affairs is complicated and give it to them. Looking at the circumstances, they shouldn’t think that the demon race is wealthy after all.” (Zef) Zef laughs.

This Lord is facing the Kuzunoha Company, and creating a method that fits their personalities.

“Then about the friendly match—” (Lucia)

“Wait.”

When Lucia was about to change the topic and was about to talk about the event that she herself would be involved in, the Demon Lord stops those words while maintaining his smile.

“Before that, there’s something this one wants to confirm with you two. Let’s hear your opinions now that you have accompanied them today. If this one were to tell you to marry Raidou, what would you do?” (Zef) “No problem.” (Lucia)

Lucia was the first to make an instant reply.

“Instant reply huh. That was quite the quick change of heart.” (Zef) “We can’t leave those people unchecked. Just like your Majesty has said, and just like what Sari has said as well; this is the truth. If someone like me will be of use, I will do my best to make sure that power doesn’t turn to the demon race.” (Lucia) “Fumu. Sari, what about you?” (Zef)

“I...can’t marry Raidou-dono.” (Sari)

“Hoh~”

Zef looks at Sari with interest.

The people around were surprised by the rejection of Sari who was positive about the marriage.

“That proposal will most likely have a reverse effect on Raidou-dono.” (Sari) “Why? No matter if it’s hyuman or demon, being given to marriage is a sign of a good relation. In times, it also serves to mediate the disputes of races, though?” (Zef) “It’s because of Mio-dono. Compared to Shiki-dono, she is a person that moves honestly to her feelings. And she has feelings for Raidou-dono. That’s how I saw it. In that case, marriage wouldn’t be a nice topic for her. If Mio-dono alone were to think of interfering with the demon race in secret, it might create enormous

damage.” (Sari) “...Does she prioritize her emotions to that level? She is a close aide of Raidou, you know?” (Zef) “She does. Compared to the demon race, the Kuzunoha Company seemed to give quite a lot of freedom. I think that something would happen before things were settled.” (Sari) “Hm...that’s a bit out of expectations. This one thought that everyone below Raidou had to follow his will definitely.” (Zef) “Also, Raidou is a lot more than what your Majesty thinks of.” (Sari) “A lot more what?” (Zef)

“Childish. I felt like he was a late blooming man. At the very least, that’s the impression I have of him when it is peaceful.” (Sari) “Childish and late blooming huh.” (Zef)

“Yes.” (Sari)

“Then wouldn’t marriage be an adequate plan? This one doesn’t think a childish person would be able to easily have fights of life and death, but... thinking about the talk that night, you certainly do have a point.” (Zef)

“But your Majesty, I have already planted a seed. Looking at him today, I think that there’s something that can bind Raidou better than marriage. Can you please leave it to me?” (Sari) “Sari!” (Lucia)

Lucia makes a rebuke.

Kuzunoha Company’s Raidou.

This is not a matter that can be left to Lucia or Sari who are still in the middle of learning.

This is something that involves the whole future of the demon race, so the strict tone of Lucia is proper.

“...Do you have confidence in it?” (Zef)

“Yes.” (Sari)

“Tell me in detail.” (Zef)

“...I will give the details after the people have been cleared out.” (Sari) “... Understood.” (Zef)

The gazes of Sari and Zef clash directly.

Both were serious, and created an atmosphere that cannot be

interrupted.

After Zef took his eyes off first, Sari continued to look at him for a while and does a small nod. After that, there was silence where no words were spoken.

“Rona, this one told you this before, but there’s a traitor within the limited people around. Look for the traitor. Don’t let it affect tomorrow’s match.” (Zef) “...Definitely.” (Rona)

“Umu. Io, this one will be doing a small modification to the friendly match. Keeping in mind the matter of the temples, this one wants to put more restrictions to the audience that will be spectating. Also, about the ones participating. Sari, you be on standby at this one’s room. Lucia, you can return, also, don’t come to tomorrow’s match. Looking at someone that has already given up wouldn’t serve as reference after all. This one will entrust you with the training of the units all day.” (Zef) At Zef’s words, there were affirmative responses from each of them.

Lucia bit her lips, but didn’t object.

Because she has already seen the power of Raidou and Kusunoha Company, it isn’t that necessary to look at the matches.

Leaving aside if such intentions of Zef had gone through, Lucia nodded and returned a response.

“After that’s finished, this one has to talk with Raidou-dono. Even though it was within expectations, these guests really do make things busy.” (Zef) ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆

“It is great that you say this. Raidou-dono has practically saved this capital after all. You have accepted the friendly match and now this; no matter how many times this one lowers his head, it wouldn’t be enough.” (Zef) “N-No no! There’s no need for his Majesty to do that. I mostly had my followers do all the work. It is truly great that Lucia-san and Sari-san are not injured.” (Makoto) Yeah.

Zef is currently right beside me.

Close.

Right beside the Lord-sama.

The taste of the food is harder to feel than yesterday.

And while at it, I can't even feel my stomach filling up.

It is being directly distributed to me, and the scale is smaller than last night, and has more people participating.

It is a method that's not that pleasant for me.

"You even investigated the cause of it. It would be fine to be more prideful of it though. Hm, your cup was already empty. Sorry for not noticing." (Zef) "I have already been given a lot, so uhm...I will take more. Please, your Majesty as well." (Makoto) I look at the liquid that's already being poured and just give up.

In this kind of situations, it is a matter of how to refuse it.

I thought that if I stopped drinking, it would be over, but Zef pointed that it was empty and began pouring more.

I give up.

"Thanks. Well you see, there's few occasions where this one can drink with someone. It even makes me feel as if Raidou-dono is my very child." (Zef) What is this person saying so casually.

He is definitely not drunk.

After hearing the thought transmission of those two these morning, these all sounds like nothing but pretense.

"Don't you already have two dependable sons? Ahaha." (Makoto) "Roshe and Sem huh. It is true that they are working hard. But what great teaching produces is mostly prodigies. Those two as well. As expected, someone with peerless talent like Raidou-dono just...doesn't appear. Well Sari is still a bit young but how about it? If you want to have one of them, or even if you take both of them, it would make me have more peace of mind." (Zef) ...The topic doesn't change.

What's with this person.

“Please stop the jokes. I am a hyuman.” (Makoto)

“If it’s someone with power, race doesn’t matter. I won’t go as far as asking you for a grandchild, you know? Hm?” (Zef) Don’t ‘hm’ me.

I am not thinking about marriage in the first place.

“I really think that it is a good offer, but right now I am still unskilled as a merchant. So I will have to refuse.” (Makoto) “Is it no good?” (Zef)

“...Yes.” (Makoto)

I was troubled in how to say it, but I decided to firmly refuse.

If I say it vaguely, he wouldn’t step back after all.

“No matter what?” (Zef)

“No matter what.” (Makoto)

“Hm...” (Zef)

Zef turns silent.

Maybe I soured his mood.

But this is too much.

I can’t just marry like this.

“Then there’s no helping it.” (Zef)

“Eh?” (Makoto)

“It is regrettable, but it must be because my daughters couldn’t catch the eye of Raidou-dono. In other words, they lacked charm. If their power wasn’t enough, the result was obvious.” (Zef) “I-I see.” (Makoto)

Talking about power here as well?!

That’s impressive.

Or more like, he easily stepped back.

I am happy, but it also makes me feel a bit uneasy.

Is this a Demon Lord quality, no, Zef quality?

How scary.

“Even if Lucia looks that way, she has quite the well-developed body you know. When she doesn’t wear that armor of hers, she does have a womanly body. It harmonizes well when she has a dress on but...since she is a soldier, it is certainly true that she is lacking in terms of womanliness. At this rate, I feel like nobody might want her and it makes this one uneasy. If she is not to Raidou-dono’s taste, it can’t be helped.” (Zef) With hyuman women receiving stronger blessings from the Goddess, it isn’t strange to have women soldiers, no, it is actually on the higher side. But when it comes to demi-humans and demons, there are difference in rates.

That there’s some is also related to the existence of magic, and a girl like Lucia-san who is at the top of the army is certainly something unusual.

I don’t know if they are blood related, but she is his daughter, and yet, what a way to say it.

Even if you say that, there’s no way I can nod to it!

Could it be he actually hasn’t given up yet?!

His expression is the same gentle smile so I can’t read him!

How unfair.

“This one does think there’s fun in learning from square one, but Raidou-dono isn’t at the age where you are able to enjoy that huh.” (Zef) “Eh, your Majesty, uhm, aren’t you drinking a bit too much?” (Makoto) He is definitely not drunk, and I can tell that the alcohol has nothing to do with it, but I blame it on the alcohol to make a follow-up.

“Then Sari must be no good either huh. She is truly at the stage where she will be turning into a woman. Even her body is immature. Is it that you don’t want to taste the immorality that can be achieved only at this point in time?” (Zef) He is not stopping.

He will most likely blame it on the alcohol later, and the two who are the topic of the conversation have stopped their hands and are trembling.

That’s right, he is shouting with quite the loud voice.

Could it be that the Demon Lord actually likes to joke around?

I do know of Rembrandt-san who is a father with daughters, but he normally faces terrible consequences after he does things like this.

I will be running away but, you do have the resolve right?

I won't be stopping it even if you ask for help later, you know?

"Honestly speaking, even if you talk to me about marrying Sari, it just doesn't click. There wasn't any noble or royalty around me that has married at an early age, so..." (Makoto) Let's go with the common sense.

I will at least try not to rub those girls in the wrong way.

"Then Raidou-dono, what kind of woman is your taste?" (Zef) "My taste?! E-Ehm, a girl that is candid but has womanly gestures?" (Makoto) "...Hoh~" (Zef)

"A girl that does her best in training?" (Makoto)

"..."

"No well, it is just a 'what if' though." (Makoto)

What am I even saying?

I have drunk too much.

It is true that it has been a repetition of drinking all and being poured more, so I have drunk quite a lot of strong alcohol.

"Fumu, does that mean Mio-dono is that type of girl?" (Zef) Bufugh?!

I get surprised by the nonchalant utterance of Zef and look at Mio.

I don't know if she is listening to the conversation, but I feel like Mio's back is unnaturally straight.

Should I confirm with thought transmission...no, confirming something like that feels wrong.

"W-Why is Mio mentioned now?" (Makoto)

"No well, she is such a beautiful woman after all. It is obvious that you have put your hands on her already, so this one just thought that it might be the case." (Zef) What's that about obviously putting my hands on her?

I definitely have not!

“She is...a subordinate. Also, how to say it, we have a relationship close to that of family, so I have ended up saying something that I normally wouldn't. I am sorry.” (Makoto) I apologize for the words that the alcohol has made me say.

I am beginning to feel like I can't lower my guard to any of Zef's words.

It is tiring.

Even if this is a banquet, even when this is a drinking party where we are the spotlight, it is incredibly tiring.

“Hahaha, it is this one who has to apologize for saying such unsavory things. This one also apologizes.” (Zef) So he is aware of it?

He is the worst, hey.

Saying that, Zef shifts his seat towards me, and closes himself to a point where his body is in contact with mine.

And then, from his pocket, he takes out something cylindrical.

It is not big.

It is a long and thin cylinder.

Ah, it is like the cylinders used to put in honorable certificates.

Does that mean, it is a document?

After that, he takes out a board that is slightly thick and places it on the table.

I don't know the material of it, but there seems to be something carved on it.

It looks like paper money.

When I tried to confirm the details of what was engraved, Zef explained it to me.

“You see, this is a transit permit that allows you to free passage to all the towns and cities within the demon race territory. There's a number of

types for it, but this has the same authority that a few in the upper stratum of the demon race army possess. Specifically speaking, you can make contact with the central part of the demon race.” (Zef) “I see.” (Makoto)

A transit permit. The quite impressive type at that huh.

Are the demons properly doing things like mobilizing the residents and refugees?

“And, this one here is...” (Zef)

Nodding to my words of understanding, Zef takes out a paper from the cylinder.

It is a high grade-looking paper.

It seems like something is written on it.

From where I am, I can’t read everything though.

“This is something that allows the Kuzunoha Company to do business tax-free in the demon race territory. This was issued formally, you know. It is well-known that this seal is something that only this one can mark, so problems and disputes will most likely not occur.” (Zef) “Hm, Kuzunoha Company’s... Kuzunoha Company?!” (Makoto)

A permit to do business in the demon race territory?!

And no tax at that?!

“Umu. Of course, I will be giving you the transit permit as well.” (Zef) That impressive transit note as well?!

Eh, is this possibly what Shiki said about ‘receiving something’?

Ah, no, is this because of the matter with the temple?

“ ... ”

“Hm, this one thought that this one was showing a relative amount of good will though. Was it not enough?” (Zef) “...I was surprised for receiving so much. It makes me wonder if I actually did something so impressive to receive all these things.” (Makoto) “Didn’t you accept the

friendly match? And not only did you resolve the situation at the temple, you also saved my two daughters. It is my gratitude for those.” (Zef) Even so, I think this is impressive.

“Later, this one will be putting it in order, but there’s one more big thing.” (Zef) There’s still more?!

Moreover, the normal procedure is to pass all the formalities before receiving the things. In other words, Zef has skipped all those procedures and has given me the things first.

It makes me think that he is forcing himself.

From the cylinder, Zef takes out one more paper.

?!!

This is...you are kidding, right?

“This is a map of our country, excluding the unexplored regions to the north. The major towns, and the paths are also recorded. This one does want you to understand that there’s classified information that’s not recorded here.” (Zef) Just like Zef said, it is a map.

A map of the demon race territory that can be coupled with the hyuman map I have.

It is true that there are blank parts here and there, and even if he says there’s major towns and paths, there were parts where the path just suddenly cuts off on the way.

But it is clearly information that could be considered classified.

It is without doubt information that no other hyuman aside from me knows of.

By the way, Kaleneon is here as well.

Zef spreads out the map that has Stella Fortress at the southern tip, and then once again wraps it up and puts it inside the cylinder along with the business permit.

“Now then, these are already yours, Raidou-dono. If possible, this one

wants you to put them to practical use, and circulate your goods to the other demon and demi-human towns. Of course, this one is also looking forward to Raidou-dono's way of fighting tomorrow." (Zef) "Uhm, I will do my best." (Makoto)

I have received incredible things after all.

No wonder Shiki told me to accept the match.

Even if we fight, our cards will not decrease that much, so this is clearly more profitable to receive.

"Please do so. Well then, from now on, let's go without all the work and formality! Let's begin from the talk about your taste in woman." (Zef)

"Please spare me from that talk already!" (Makoto)

"Can't do that. How can this one call himself a Demon Lord when this one can't even reward properly the guest that has worked so hard at the temple?" (Zef) "I have already received plenty!" (Makoto)

"No! At the very least, take one of my daughters." (Zef)

We went back to square one?!

"Didn't I refuse that already?! In the first place, that topic is mixed with work, you know!" (Makoto) With the talking and alcohol, a night that felt like an infinite loop advanced on.

Chapter 191: The darkness of the demon race, and the shining one

Well, I did think it would turn out this way.

At the day when there's not much till we leave the demon race capital, I was walking infinitely inside the underground corridor of the castle, and was guided to a big hall.

It is truly wide.

There were seats at the outer circumference, so I can tell that that's the place where people will be spectating the battle from.

For a friendly match arena, it is truly splendid.

As expected, there's no way they would make us fight inside the pitch black blizzard outside, but I didn't expect that they would ready such a well-put stage.

When I look up, I can see a high-ceiling like that of a dome, and at the top there's a hole where the night sky can be seen.

And, what is happening currently is that...I am alone in this excessively spacious hall.

That's the situation.

There's no Mio and Shiki.

Those two that are able to suppress the High Spirits are already well-known.

'That's why, there's no problem if only Raidou-dono shows his strength', they said.

In summary, that's what happened, and now my two followers are at the spectator seats.

The things I received were impressive after all~.

I do feel that listening to a bit of their unreasonable requests is okay, and there's also the fact that using power on the level of a High Spirit would

make the arena crumble.

Because you know, I have received a transit permit to pass freely through their whole nation, and I have also received something akin to the royal seal of the Demon Lord.

Even if I open stores in several towns, I won't have to pay taxes.

The demi-humans are many, and the good distribution is lacking.

Thinking about being tax free in such a place of unknown marketing possibilities...

As long as I don't fall in any unforeseen circumstances, it is manners to repay this, right?

This time it was unlucky, or more like, the natural price to pay.

That's what I think, so I am standing here.

"Now then, I wonder who will be my opponent." (Makoto)

The announcement that resounds through the hall signals the beginning of the friendly match.

There's not many spectators, and there isn't that wild enthusiasm like that of the Rotsgard fighting arena.

In exchange, there's serious gazes as if they were gulping their breaths, being poured at me.

It feels as if every move I make is being observed.

As a lecturer, I have felt this kind of gaze a few times, and in Japan when we had meetings for archery display.

"Geh, the worst possibility from what I have imagined. As I thought, my unluckiness is still going strong." (Makoto) There's four shadows walking to meet me.

From my guess, I thought the ones coming out would be the Demon Generals or the Demon Lord, but I did think that maybe all the Demon Generals would be coming out.

With how things have been going, I even thought that Zef himself would

be coming out, but as expected, having the Demon Lord be defeated in front of his subordinates is just bad.

I did feel that he wouldn't do any messing around in regards to being Lord, so at that point, I am not that surprised.

Even so, all the Demon Generals huh.

Leaving Io and Rona aside, I somewhat know what Reft can do; but the last one, I don't know much about that one.

Until today, I have not been able to properly speak to that person, and there haven't been many moments when I have seen that person say something.

It was an unkempt hair man wearing a white robe.

The type that would look good with tobacco.

I thought he was a demi-human, but maybe this person is a hyuman?

They stopped at a distance equal to that of when baseball players pay their respects.

"...Let me tell you this first, I am not a hyuman, Raidou-dono."

"Ah, sorry." (Makoto)

He noticed I was looking at him huh.

I thought I was being inconspicuous though.

"It seems like I have 1/16 of demi-human blood. I don't know the name of the race though."

"..."

No no no, isn't that practically like being a hyuman?

It is like saying your parents are quarters and your grandfather a half, right?

And if on top of all that, there was only one demi-human there...and since you already look hyuman, isn't hyuman fine?

"I see, you are just like I have heard. Blood, race, and outward

appearance doesn't matter. How interesting. Just what kind of living did you have to grow in this way?"

"Every living being is equal. It seems you already know, but I am Raidou Misumi. Please be lenient with me today." (Makoto) "Mokuren Kazusa. Even if this is a match, it is a serious battle. Something rude like pulling punches isn't what I will be doing. Even if I look like this, I live as part of one of the demon race after all. The power within this body of mine, I will let you witness a bit of it." (Kazusa) "Hahaha..." (Makoto)

He isn't a warrior right?

He is a mage.

And he is not like Rona who holds two posts. He gives out the smell of a pure magician.

Also...he has an atmosphere similar to someone.

That feeling is...right, an alchemist.

I can feel the scent of a researcher from this person.

...How nostalgic. Was his name Hazaru? He is probably still at Toa-san's party doing more leveling and living thoughtlessly huh.

"I wish that Raidou-dono and I don't stand this way on the battlefield. But today, I will do my best." (Io) With four arms and wearing gauntlets that one can tell are high grade at a glance, Io rises up and shows a competitive smile filled with motivation.

...The ceiling is open, so at worst, I can just throw him away with a rocket punch again.

"..."

Rona is completely silent.

She is not saying a single word.

Is what I thought, but it seems she has already formed several spells and concealing it.

It seems she is already at the brim by trying to control them, but she is

playing it cool in her expression.

It feels like a lot of things will be flying at me right from the start.

“I am sorry for leaving early at the other day’s banquet. I am the Demon General, Reft. Someone like me has received the position of Demon General by the kindness of his Majesty. I am happy to have the chance of seeing your power that has been recognized by his Majesty.” (Reft) “You are a hybrid dragon, right? I have heard that you possess a great power. I am looking forward to it.” (Makoto) “?!! So you know of hybrid dragons. It seems you are someone of extensive knowledge. Here as well, I am looking forward to it.” (Reft) ...

Tomoe said it as if it were common knowledge though.

So it was rare information?!

“Then, all that’s left is to wait for the signal to begin.” (Makoto) “....”

For some reason, the Demon Generals make a strange expression.

We did introduce ourselves and the announcement has finished, so next would be the signal of: ‘FIGHT!’, right?

“Eh? It seems like it isn’t beginning.” (Makoto)

“...Raidou-dono, today we will be fighting with you, but...” (Io)

Io speaks to me.

“Yes?” (Makoto)

“Did you not hear the details?” (Io)

“The only thing I was told by his Majesty was to lightly show my strength.” (Makoto) “Umu. In that case, regarding the fight...” (Io)

“Yes, it is fine to just fight with everyone, right?” (Makoto)

“....”

I-Is that not the case?

“Raidou-dono, could it be that you are intending to fight us all at once?” (Io) “Eh? That’s not how it was?” (Makoto)

Silence once again.

No well, you see, Io seems to be the strongest of the four Demon Generals, so going 1vs1 four times is just pointless, isn't it?

"Io, the permission has come from his Majesty. It seems it is fine that way." (Rona) "But Rona, that's just..." (Io)

Hm?

"The person himself has the intention to do so, you know? Also, if it's just showing a light amount of power, that's fine, right? Hey, I don't want to speak too much, I am concentrating after all." (Rona) "...Understood. Fine." (Io)

The sigh of Io served as a signal. The Demon Generals began to move.

Io and Reft went forward, Rona at the middle, and Mokuren as the rear guard.

Io is slightly further ahead, but the formation is 2-1-1.

The announcement to commence comes out with fluster.

The words announcing the beginning of the battle between four Demon Generals and I resounds through the hall.

"Then, to begin things... [Brid]!" (Makoto)

Kicking the ground, I jump backwards while releasing fire Brids towards the four Demon Generals respectively.

They told me a while ago to not hold back, but I am not my same past self that would take those words seriously.

To restrain it, I reduced the power and speed.

"As expected, arialess as if it were natural! Mokuren, I am counting on you! Even if it's arialess, think of Raidou's spells as possessing their complete firepower!" (Rona) "No problem. In terms of high speed spell deployment, I am also good at it." (Mokuren) As I thought, he is really a magician huh.

Mokuren treats his dagger as a staff and does an aria, and an aria that is

done with the fingers...and it is arialess at the same time?!

Oh, there's a prodigy here!

Mokuren does an aria for around 6 spells at the same time.

He creates a barrier that properly blocks all my Brids, moreover, it seems he has placed a number of support spells on his allies.

There's still magic power revolving around their surroundings, so they probably still have something set up.

A magician similar to Ema huh.

It's been awhile since I have seen someone like that.

Being able to do parallel arias is already impressive. The demon race is truly passionate.

"I will not leave you space to target Mokuren!" (Io)

Oh.

Io accelerates with a speed that doesn't fit his large build, and closes in with his fists ready.

It is not a timing where evasion will make it in time.

Obviously they will not tell me they are that fast huh.

I use the Magic Armor, which was forcefully named Materia Prima by a random pervert, and stop his attack.

While at it, I grab Io and restrain him. I point him towards the dark night and throw him.

Depending on the people watching, it might have looked like a master at Aikido had thrown a giant away.

...It was simple raw power though.

"GUOOOOO!!"

"The next is...Reft-san, was it? It has been a while since I have seen a spear user." (Makoto) This person seems to be a warrior type as well, so let's try punching him.

“Sorry but, I will have to resist!” (Reft)

Oh?

I can’t grab him.

From the place I tried to grab, the arm was thrown aside.

I see. So this is the counter expert huh.

Reft uses splendid spearmanship to parry the Magic Armor that approaches.

Impressive.

It is understandable why Mio tried to learn this technique.

It is on the level of art.

How interesting.

“?!!”

I was unconsciously fascinated by the technique of Reft, and a shock comes from my back.

It is Rona.

Ah, it seems she set up a few spells.

The first shot didn’t seem like it could do something to the Magic Armor, but the explosions continue.

As if swallowing up one spot, Rona releases a line up of her own high firepower spells one after the other.

Even so, at my very front there’s Reft swinging his spear while including the spells in the attacks. His offensive didn’t falter.

I am in a pincer situation.

Dealing with the two at the same time will be difficult.

Then I will begin with Reft.

If Rona finishes shooting her spells, she will step back after all.

“[Brid]!” (Makoto)

Arialess, around 5 Brides are shot from the body of the Magic Armor to Reft.

The spear that was swung around stopped, and the attacks from the front stop.

Well, it is a surprise attack, so he shouldn't be able to deal with it properly.

Then, next is Rona.

"I can't let you catch me!" (Rona)

"I was one step slower huh. Well done." (Makoto)

Rona quickly takes her distance by kicking a part of the Magic Armor and returning to her previous spot.

She used me as a foothold! Is what I would have liked to try saying.

"Being engrossed in me is dangerous, you know?" (Rona)

"Eh? Uo?!" (Makoto)

A strong shock five times.

They were practically Shiki-class spells...wait, those were my Brides.

I see, so they were all reflected back huh.

Receiving my own spells feels fresh.

I wasn't the guinea pig of Mio's technique experiment after all.

"A scarily accurate attack. But on top of that..."

"No, more than that, how to say it..."

What incredible pressure!

Above?!

"Too slow!" (Io)

Io?!

"You returned?!" (Makoto)

"I won't let you treat me like an idiot twice!!" (Io)

Perfectly utilizing the falling momentum into his fist, he makes contact with the Magic Armor.

A ripple spreads through the whole Magic Armor, but Io's eyes didn't show any signs of this being the end.

Just like that, he uses another arm to do an attack, and at the end, he adds a kick just like Rona and creates distance from the Magic Armor.

The wind and shock wave it created travelled all the way to the spectator seats.

Even though they shouldn't be able to see it.

Are the two of them the type that can feel things instinctively?

Like this, it would be better to change it from concealment to enhancement?

"I thought that Io-dono's type wouldn't be able to easily fly through the sky though..." (Makoto) "It wasn't easy! But I was defeated in such a pathetic way after all!" (Io) He is using 'ore'.

He is already in total battle mode.

So you are the type of prodigy that can do anything when you try to.

"And, it is about time, right Rona?" (Io)

"Yeah, just in time. He is not that good at dealing with schemes after all, that Raidou 'rear guard'." (Rona) Rona points at her own waist and smiles at me.

Waist?

?!

Something black is clinging onto the Magic Armor?!

That thing continues to expand, and as if announcing that it was time, its surface began to show dark red cracks.

It feels like a countdown.

Feeling the activation of a spell that I can't even feel the F of friendly, I

reflexively change [Sakai] from concealment to enhancement.

A strong shock and the sound of an explosion. A black and red light envelop my field of vision.

Is it a time bomb spell?

What terrifying firepower.

Big part of the Magic Armor that was shifted to enhancement was blown away.

Is this possibly the trump card of Rona?

I did think at Limia that she had some sort of ace hidden.

It seemed like more than its firepower, its ability to scrape away on magic power is stronger.

I can only try and tell from her expression huh.

I am not good at that though.

I wait for the light and smoke to disperse.

But...that was a bad move.

I feel the activation of magic power from my feet.

!! Right, there's also the guy Mokuren.

When all four Demon Generals are together, they have a dangerous disposition.

Even though it should be an ironclad rule that the Four Heavenly Kings of the Demon Lord never get along!

"Taste a ritual spell. Second model, 'Hail' Revision." (Mokuren) I hear the voice of Mokuren.

The Magic Armor is scrapped off again by what looks like raging needles flying in the surroundings.

He said it is a ritual spell, right?

If I remember correctly, it is a spell that hides itself and is used in wide scale battles.

Not only is he able to do parallel arias, but he is also able to do something like that by himself.

Or more like, I am not a castle or an army you know!

I am an individual!

While I was complaining, the needles scrape off the Magic Armor, and they adhere to it and change into ice.

It can harden the movements huh.

It is harsher than the ice magic that Rona used when she was Karen.

I unconsciously remembered that.

“Now then everyone, get away. Fuh~.” (Mokuren)

He still intends to do more?

“Third Model, ‘Starfall Revision’” (Mokuren)

It is troublesome that my field of vision has still not gotten better.

Right now the Magic Armor is just partly frozen, but with enhancing [Sakai], unless something really big happens, it will be okay.

I want to see the spell, so maybe I should clear out the frozen parts of the Magic Armor and sweep the surroundings?

If that also clears away the ritual magic, it would be two birds with one stone.

I trace the places that are frozen in the Magic Armor, and add fire element to it.

An explosion that is probably on the same level as Rona’s spell, is created with me at the center.

I quickly reform the Magic Armor and confirm the situation.

The Demon Generals have shifted to defense.

At most, the heat wave that headed to Reft is being returned to me.

Well, no problem.

And now, the ritual spell of just now...

I sound out my surroundings.

Above again huh.

It was Starfall, right?

I don't think something worse than I will be falling down, but...

...Lava?

Muddled magma that has bright red stones sticking onto it is pouring down at me from the sky?!

As expected of ritual magic.

The scale is on another level.

"No matter the circumstances, to use something like these twice in a friendly match is questionable!!" (Makoto) "Looking at you who's practically unhurt, I can only call it appropriate!" (Mokuren) "For you to be unwounded even when I used that, just how tough are you? At least receive a slight scald for formality!" (Rona) Don't say unreasonable things!

Damn it!!

"There's no way this will end with a simple scaaaald!!" (Makoto) I use the two arms of the Magic Armor that are most likely visible to everyone now, and grab the lava into a ball.

"No way. Without mitigating it, using a barrier, or even avoiding it; he grabbed it? A big molten mass?" (Mokuren) ...Right.

It would be okay to just avoid it.

Hearing the dumbfounded mutter of Mokuren, I slightly regretted my decision.

"One, two... counter!!" (Makoto)

"That's not a counter!" (Reft)

The moment I throw the lava ball to the Demon Generals, Reft makes a rude shout.

I grabbed it before I received the attack and am now throwing it back, so it is a proper counter...probably.

“Kuh...don’t let it work!” (Rona)

“Leave it to me!” (Io)

With those words just now, one of the four gauntlets shone brightly, and the body of Io turned bright red.

He is totally like a super robot.

Not only is he able to fly, he even has equipment that lets him do type changes huh.

Io who now looks like he is strong against fire, uses all his four arms to receive the ball of lava that has a size of around 5 meters.

Even if he has gauntlets, it is still like grabbing it with his bare hands.

It is the incarnation of a super robot.

I would like to have one of those...

No wait, the other two at the rear have already evacuated from the crashing point.

Mokuren and Rona; not only did they both step back, they also activated support magic and have buffed Io and Reft.

They are nimble.

Reft who is remaining, makes a terribly concentrated expression at the lava ball that Io actually stopped, and literally pierces it with the spear in his hand.

“Is this dodge ball?!” (Makoto)

Once again, the lava ball flies at me at high speed.

Hey hey, this won’t become endless, right?

Just like Mokuren said, avoiding it would be better.

“No no, you should fight it fair and square there, Raidou-dono.”

“Mokuren?! Just when did you...” (Makoto)

“Magicians have methods of mobilizing called teleportation. Even if I am the weakest, I am still a Demon General you see. I do a lot of things on a level where Rona doesn’t get angry at me.” (Mokuren) “And, what’s that note that’s in your hand?” (Makoto)

I look at the space where I was going to run to, and there, Mokuren was already there. I try asking about the note that I can tell is a spell that’s about to be activated.

This is bad.

I have been confined.

“It is a spell that has its aria stored beforehand. I call it catalyst magic, but you can call it whatever you want. Now then, it is the development that we had anticipated. I will have you show us how you will be escaping from this one. ‘Starfall’ Revision, duplication.” (Mokuren) From Mokuren, another lava ball comes.

Another pincer attack.

You demons really like flanking huh!

Can’t be helped. Let’s receive them.

The second lava comes at me with a slight difference in time.

The first one; I repel it with a backhand to a direction where no Demon General is in.

It would be troublesome if they were to throw it back again after all.

The next one is...fast.

If possible, I wanted to repel it up, but I receive it with one hand.

In terms of intensity, the Materia Prima is higher, so I ward off the sensation of being pushed back, and later, I was able to stop it.

Okay, I probably can do it.

Just like that, I make one arm bigger, and cover the ball like a baseball glove.

I feel like if I carelessly crush it, it would make a big explosion, so I wrap

it all and while controlling the power, I forcibly...

“Your Majesty!!”

Majesty?

Zef?

I was slightly surprised by the words of Io and look at the direction that the voice was directed at.

Ah, it is at the direction where I threw away one of the balls.

There, there was the shadow of one person.

It is certainly the Demon Lord.

Just where...ah, the guest seats huh.

If it crashes to the outer circumference just like that, it might create casualties in the spectators.

Now that I look carefully, he doesn't have his mantle on.

It looks like he is intending to face it.

It might be far, but I can see Zef's body build.

Incredible.

Even though he has a tough job like being a Lord, he has an abnormally toned body.

He did seem like he has been training, but his body is like that of someone whose main job is warrior.

The scary slim macho, Zef.

He draws out the sword at his waist.

I am also stopping a lava ball similar to the one that's heading to Zef, but I unconsciously forgot about it and was fascinated.

It was a beautiful movement.

Also, he is drawing his sword and doing an aria at the same time.

The aria is continuing even when he has already finished drawing his

sword, but both actions were incredibly smooth.

Those are movements that show he is able to do it multiple times.

I who has been doing that all the time, am sure of it.

That's why I was able to nod at the confidence that Zef was showing.

Confidence that he is able to deal with it.

Since I have the chance, let's watch the technique of the Demon Lord.

Against the lava that was approaching, Zef brandishes his sword backwards.

The length of that long sword is not normal.

The sword Zef holds is also of a high quality that's able to handle his technique. And it also serves as a catalyst to safely activate his spell.

And then, the lava ball disappears from in front of him.

Within the things that I have seen in this world, it is the most perfected combination of magic and weapon.

What was used along with the sword was a barrier spell.

But it is a terrifying special type of barrier that vanishes anything that touches.

So the Demon Lord Zef is a swordsman that has mastered barriers or that type of spells huh.

By the time I noticed, I had already compressed the lava I was holding and had extinguished it.

It feels mysterious.

That sword might be the same as my bow.

A power that was born from breaking my heart.

A truly mysterious feeling of respect and empathy.

"That all! Raidou-dono, it was splendid. You were able to fight against all the Demon Generals and was able to fight them this well. This is certainly something that everyone here has witnessed. It was a splendid match.

After this, I will present you a reward. Now then—” (Zef) The words of Zef signal the end of the match.

But that didn’t actually tie it to an end.

“Bring divine punishment to the slave of power!!”

The voice that was heard after, had erased the words of Zef.

At that moment, the presence of something raining down at high amounts was felt. A thunderous sound and the light of an explosion envelop the hall.

The Demon Generals had begun moving towards Zef, but I didn’t understand what was happening and for now, just prioritize defense.

Soon after, I had felt the approach of Mio and Shiki.



“That’s quite the flashy entrance.”

In the arena that has completely turned into outskirts, I look around and mutter.

But I am impressed.

In an instant, the Demon Generals protected Zef and Zef had protected the spectator seats.

Of course, it wasn’t as if he was able to protect everything. It was a destruction scale that would be natural to have several victims.

There’s already no presence of spectators in the surroundings. When I confirm with [Sakai], I could tell that they have already arrived at the castle and have taken refuge.

How dependable.

In exchange, several tens of totally equipped people have appeared, and were looking at me.

It is the people that said: ‘Divine retribution to the slave of power’.

So this destruction is also their doing huh.

It is dusty, the place is filled with rubble, and it was a splendid underground arena, and yet, there's no trace of it now.

Is this the darkness of the demon race?

The Spirit rampage was also something planned, so it may have been done by them as well.

“Waka-sama, you are okay.” (Shiki)

“With the matter of the Spirits, and this as well; the security of the demon race is actually not that impressive huh. It lets me have more job to do-desu kedo.” (Mio) “Thanks, you two. It is certainly true that there's more accidents in the demon race capital than that of the Empire.”

(Makoto) I thank Shiki and Mio who came for me, and I look at Zef.

Near him, there's several that have fallen victim and one of them is injured, but Zef is not treating her.

He is fighting against the terrorists and he is prioritizing that.

In compensation, there's Mokuren who has blood flowing from his side and carrying Rona who seems to be barely holding her consciousness.

So it was an attack that was enough to injure even the Demon Generals huh. Or maybe there was another attack afterwards against Zef and the others?

I haven't grasped that much of the situation.

“You guys really don't choose the place and time huh.” (Zef)

“Zef, in order to finish your tyrannical rule, we don't intend to choose the methods.”

The representative of the armed group is talking with Zef.

This can be considered a verbal clash.

There's not going to be a peaceful resolution now, so I think that in terms of power, Zef and the others have an overwhelming advantage.

It depends on how they will act and if they have something prepared though.

I do feel a strange flow of power after all.

I still don't know what it is.

"This one's tyrannical rule, huh. This one doesn't understand. In the first place, is there a tyranny bigger than that of the Goddess for us? This one is actually ruling for the advance of the demon race's survival and liberation though. Without any selfish motive." (Zef) "Don't think that everything can be forgiven just because you do it without any selfish motive. Even though you bastard are not as tyrannical as the Goddess, the will of a God is not government. Putting it on the same level as the ruling of a person is just plain arrogance."

"Are you saying that killing this one and accepting the Goddess will help in the survival of the demon race?" (Zef) "Of course."

"...What's your basis?" (Zef)

"We are a race that was created by the Goddess. As a proof of her affection, we have lived until this day. That's the best proof."

Incredible.

Even within the demons, there's people that even after being oppressed by the Goddess this much, forced to war, and even brought heroes to repel them; they still have faith in her.

The Earth and Fire Spirits that are more moderate, or more like the type that help out when needed, are more reasonable than these guys.

I can only call them fanatics. I can't understand them at all.

"It is certainly true. Maybe she will give a slight speck of pity towards us. As a result, a handful of demons will be able to survive by falling into slavery to humans. Compared to resisting and be exterminated, it is certainly true that this way we can achieve survival. But are you guys going to guide us to such a future? Have your children and grandchildren forgive the irrationality and favoritism of the Goddess? Is that what you will order them to do?" (Zef) Zef's words were calm.

But anger can be felt.

I don't know if that Bug will forgive the demon race that has killed that many humans she loves.

She looks stupid, so maybe if they flatter her and throw their whole faith to her, it might lead to the situation Zef has stated though.

"You were the bastard that changed the impression of us demons as an existence that brings harm to this world! The world is below the grace of God. At the very least, if we didn't rebel, we could have had peace! You raided the humans, stole their land, and still continuing war! And even within the demons, you have given tacit consent to an ancient evil practice, and have crudely treated the life of many! That sin of yours has to be paid by you and your subordinates! That way, we demons will be able to apologize for our barbarity to the humans and demi-humans for the first time!"

"Can't even talk to you. The will of the demon race is together with me. As a result, the path of war has been chosen. That's all there is to it. In the first place, you say that before the war we were fine, and yet, you say we had evil practices. Aren't your words already contradictory?" (Zef) "Then can you call it happiness to bind people by their aptitude and abilities, and not giving them freedom in choosing their jobs?! Is it happiness to thin out the children of a certain age in this harsh environment?! Is it happiness for the strong to not even be able to choose their own partner in marriage and have them be managed by the country?! Just because they have the talent, the children are unable to live with their parents for the short amount of time they are born into this world. Such a country, can it be called happiness?! This is something you have given consent to, Zef!! Answer!!"

...

The darkness of the demon race huh.

I see.

"It is not consent." (Zef)

"So you are going to deceive through words huh. As a Demon Lord!"

“You talk about consent, but from what this one knows, this is something that this one proposed and accepted.” (Zef) “Wh-at?”

...

“What’s wrong with putting the people in posts that are more fitting for them and be more useful for society? The children that can’t endure this environment will only reduce our food; if that means the working ones will end up starving as well, this one will take the responsibility and deal with them. This custom is not enforced in wealthy towns and the demi-humans, but the towns and villages that want to survive, this one won’t open its mouth against any. The strong leaving their strength to the next era is the obvious contribution they have to do for the country. The strong have to pay that price and carry the burden in order for the country to survive. And about the matter of children and parents, it is the nature of demons to appoint the most excelling person as the Lord that will guide the people. If you resent that, then don’t point that resentment towards this one or the demon race society; lament the misfortune that you have been born as a demon.” (Zef) “...A peasant’s child has grown to be quite prideful huh.”

“It would have been possible for this one to continue as a peasant. You who are the child of a demon noble family and should have led us, not only have you crushed your own household, you even rebel to the country. You have really fallen low.” (Zef) “...If at the very least, you were to hold doubts towards the evil customs, we could have taken hands together. But it is already impossible to join our wills huh.”

“Same thoughts. Being an omnipresent savior for the weak, is not this one’s ruling. It is evident that our cooperation would have ended as temporary.” (Zef) “Just how long do you think that government of choosing the strong and leaving the weak will continue?”

“People that are intoxicated by kind words and comply to slavery, will never understand it. More importantly, you have done this much. You must be prepared for the consequences, right?” (Zef) “Even though you knew the Spirit rampaging wasn’t our only plan... Was the source of your composure, that monster over there? But let me show you, a way of

showing will that you bastards don't know of."

"If that's how the Kuzunoha Company looked to you, this one apologizes. Even you guys wouldn't want to do a foolish move that would end up destroying our whole country, right?" (Zef) I have been called 'monster' a lot, so I don't mind it that much.

Well, even if they invite me to tea, I would have definitely refused it though. You terrorists.

"That makes it even more convenient. This current demon race should be completely destroyed after all."

"...Then that rudeness, this one will take your place and apologize. By lining up your idiotic heads, that is. Io, Reft." (Zef) Not only did Zef, Io, and Reft prepare their stances with those words, they suddenly charged.

They really send their heads flying, and it ended in less than ten seconds.

Io even did a stunt like using his hand as a sword.

He is truly a troublesome giant.

Skillful and diligent, moreover, has a natural constitution.

"If they can't use what they set up, there's no point, right your Majesty?"

"No, it seems like they were buying time with their lives on the line."
(Zef) Yeah.

Something has activated.

The faint strange power that was drifting about, is now showing its contours clearly.

When I look for the location, it was hidden by the rubble, an ornamented staff that was stabbed on the ground.

It must be that.

"A staff? It seems like the activation has already begun though."
(Makoto) "That is... the Governor Scepter? Could it be! Mio-dono, can you interrupt the activation?!" (Shiki) "Something like that is easy...Hm? It is awfully old and strong. This...I can't negate it?" (Mio) "I...see. No, it can't

be helped. If that's what I think it is, it might turn troublesome. Well, it is just a 'might', so I think it will be okay." (Shiki) Shiki seems to know something.

"Shiki, what's that?" (Makoto)

"...It is probably a sacred treasure of Elysion. It should have been lost though. I think it is the scepter that led an army of dragons, the Governor Scepter." (Shiki) "Dragon Governor Scepter?" (Makoto)

"A scepter that has been heridated by Kings of Elysion, a scepter that summons dragons. It is an article that has many stories of. It was unable to protect the related country from destruction, but it possesses enormous power." (Shiki) Summon dragons huh.

Elysion, dragon.

Eh? Something bothers me.

"Even if powerful, the demon race was able to deal with it once and Elysion was destroyed, right? Shiki, is this really something to be agitated for?" (Makoto) "...That sacred treasure uses immense amount of magic power or blood and lives that matches it to activate, but the result is random." (Shiki) "...Random?" (Makoto)

The terrorists staked their lives on this last trump card which is a sacred treasure from another country, moreover, the activation result is random, you say.

It is like coming just to receive an honorable death.

What they said was also disgusting, but I really don't understand them.

"...You really know well. Shiki-dono really has extensive knowledge. That's certainly the trump card of the resistance and the sacred treasure of Elysion, the dragon army's Governor Scepter." (Zef) "Your Majesty." (Makoto)

Zef talks to us as he approaches.

Io, Reft and Zef; all three of them held several heads in their hands.

"There's no way to apologize for involving you in our internal troubles."

(Zef) “No. More importantly, is it okay to not deal with that Governor Scepter?” (Makoto) When I ask, Zef shakes his head to the sides.

It seems Zef knows of the dragon army’s Governor Scepter.

Not its existence, but of its whereabouts.

“It is already up to fate to decide what will be summoned. There’s no choice but to pray for the luck of the people here.” (Zef) “By the way, what’s the worst case?” (Makoto)

It is my nature to worry about the misfortune when talking about luck.

“Excluding the Superior Dragons; it will summon a variety of dragons in this place, and in madness, they will rampage.” (Zef) That’s a picture of hell.

No, it is better because there’s no Superior Dragon huh.

“A variety huh.” (Makoto)

“Umu. It seems like it will bring all the dragons in the world at once. Well, just like Shiki-dono says, it is a possibility only.” (Zef) “And that’s why it is dragon army.” (Makoto)

If the chance is of one in a hundred, then... a 0.01 chance?

Nai wa~

I wouldn’t be able to bet my life for it~.

Is it a bet they would be willing to take in order to take down what seems to be an imposing Zef?

“...From what this one knows, the dragon army is the best result. This one doesn’t know of any higher than that though. As a result of our investigation, even if there’s a chance, it would truly be lower than that of a one in a hundred. It is at a chance that is close to impossible.” (Zef) It feels like a lot of zeros would line up.

Then it is in the safe zone huh.

I’m glad.

Then if we just knock down the dragon that comes out, it will be over

huh.

“This is not good.” (Shiki)

“It smells-desu ne.” (Mio)

Shiki?

Mio?

“What is?” (Makoto)

“It is a possibility that Waka-sama might be able to draw.” (Shiki) “Yeah. A being that a person would take his whole lifetime to search and never be able to meet, Waka-sama is the type of person that would be able to meet that being twice in a week.” (Mio) You are part of those beings though.

...That’s true. In less than a week I met Tomoe and Mio after all.

Those chances are quite low.

They are probably joking, but when they say those things at this moment with those straight faces, it kinda gets to me.

“You two, aren’t you being a bit cruel there?” (Makoto)

“See.” (Mio)

“Eh?”

At Mio’s words, I look at the location that her hand was pointing at.

A golden light does a straight line unto the dark sky and it cuts through that darkness.

...Hah...

It is been awhile since I have been bask by a strong light like that of the morning.

I open my eyes that I closed for an instant, and look at Zef who was at my side... and for the first time, he showed serious agitation.

The area between his brows had thick creases, and he is looking at the light with a grim expression.

While cladding his body with a magic power stronger than that from

before, Zef looked like he was thinking of a way to deal with the situation.

Or more like, this feeling, the presence I feel from the golden light...it is that person.

It has been connected.

Elysion, the Governor Scepter, dragons; there's no one but that person.

We hit the jackpot, no, we picked out a big miss huh.

"No way. It was a percentage that shouldn't be possible to achieve you know? In the first place, we just assumed that there was a step higher than that of an army of dragons just for the safety of the investigation." (Zef)
The words of Zef made my ears hurt.

From the center of the light, a shadow of a big dragon appears.

A western-style dragon.

Its body surpasses in size to that of Grount. And the wings made its body look even bigger.

Also, there's not only a pair of wings.

The trait of that dragon was that there were three pairs of wings with different sizes.

"...Root."

That damn pervert.

Just what is he thinking by turning hostile?

"Root, you say? It existed? The Harmony Dragon that owns all elements. The peak of the Superior Dragons that is also called the Ancient Dragon or the Heavenly Dragon. Why is an existence that is treated in equal footing to that Goddess accepting the summoning of something like a sacred treasure?" (Zef) Zef mutters in pain.

It can't be helped.

I don't know how much of the situation he understands, but a Lord has to deal with things in a realistic manner.

And to create a countermeasure for something that his trusty subordinates said would be impossible to occur, is just not realistic.

...It would have been more understandable if he were to actually utilize it to do something.

Zef is that kind of Lord.

He advances through the things he chooses, and he understands the things he will lose and the risks that come with it.

I can't empathize with all his methods, but I can understand.

(...Ah, it has been a while, Makoto-kun. This situation, I would be grateful if you were to explain it to me.) (Root) I can hear a spaced out voice.

It sounds as if he doesn't have any sort of tension.

It is thought transmission.

There's only one possible person.

(Root, did you want to fight me so much that you even came to the demon race territory?) (Makoto) (Fight with Makoto-kun?! No no no... wait, don't tell me...the target of the Governor Scepter is...) (Root) (Zef and everyone below. It seems like it also includes me though?) (Makoto) (Achaa. I have been played. To think that the summoning I placed on the Governor Scepter as a joke would activate at this moment. Hey, did you possibly make a pact with an evil spirit of chances?) (Root) (Like hell I would do a pact that will bring me misfortune. Since the time I came to this world, I have been on a high rave of unluckiness.) (Makoto) (...Since it is already like this, I will endure the pain, so be gentle, okay?) (Root) Contrary to his words, Root begins to create a fiendish rainbow colored ball.

The light ball that can be seen within his big open mouth has power gathering steadily.

You, if it was against your will, go back home!

(I won't hurt you, so go back home.) (Makoto)

(Ahaha, I can't. This summoning is absolute. It is forcing me to do an attack with no holds barred. I was caught in my own trap you see. Your specialty.) (Root) (Stop the sarcasm. Then at least tell me what you will do. I will do what I can after.) (Makoto) (Ah, I might fall all over again. How reliable! It is like a buckshot blaze with a mixture of six elements. It would easily destroy the castle and the land in the vicinity.) (Root) I want to tell him not to nonchalantly say such atrocious things.

(...You, are you going leave after throwing that one attack?) (Makoto) (Yes. Because you know, summoned beasts are that kind of way it seems. In the game that my husband played.) (Root) <FINAL FANTASY!> (I now understand that I shouldn't underestimate the playful heart of a dragon.) (Makoto) As if affirming the words of Root, the power shows abnormal rises as if there's no ceiling to stop.

At this rate, the topography will change.

I don't know if this situation was brought by my unluckiness, but I feel like it would be bad for the demon race capital to be destroyed by this.

Sorry, I am unlucky you see.

Is not something I can say.

I don't intend to cooperate in war, but they have treated me well.

Even if that treatment was brought by their evaluation of my power, the truth is the truth.

"To think that such a disgrace would occur..." (Zef)

While expanding a barrier, Zef laughs.

Too bad but, even he can't block everything.

Even if we just think of the after-effect, it would destroy at least half of the capital.

In terms of people, half might not be enough.

"..."

It is not on a level like the lava ball.

My Materia Prima can't do the same thing.

I can take it and can repel it, but it won't kill all the power, so it will definitely bring heavy damage to the surroundings.

Also, being a buckshot is problematic.

If I make the Magic Armor bigger, the density will decrease.

H-How troublesome.

If possible, I want to just use Azusa to pierce through that mouth of his.

If I do that, it would definitely create a giant crater with this place at the centre.

I can't do that.

I take my distance from the Demon Lord's group and begin consulting with the two.

"Mio, what do you think we should do?" (Makoto)

"Isn't it fine to just take refuge?" (Mio)

In Asora, is what her eyes are saying.

It is the best place for refuge.

It would end with us unscathed after all.

"...Shiki?" (Makoto)

"...Magic is also a product of someone's image. Waka-sama's Magic Armor is also the same. If we go by that logic, it is not like there's no way like Waka-sama thinks. But I also recommend taking refuge. It may be unfortunate for the demon race, but it can also be called karma. It seems like they did understand that such a factor could happen, so being prepared for it can also be called the principle of the strong." (Shiki) So there's a way huh.

Then, let's try it.

I won't be dying from that much anyways, so even if I fail, I won't be losing anything.

“Shiki, explain in detail. Mio, you help as well, okay?” (Makoto) “You will do it? Then, first I will be taking permission from his Majesty. Root-dono seems to be increasing the power more after all.” (Shiki) “If Waka-sama decided to, I will happily help out-desu wa.” (Mio) Shiki goes to where Zef is.

If I mess up, the ones who will be facing the worst will be the demon race after all.

It is necessary to confirm if it's okay to do it.

If we are told to not do anything, then we can just take refuge in Asora anyways.

Rona is being treated as usual, and Mokuren is carrying her all this time. But I won't lend them Shiki.

I will have him cooperate with me from now on after all.

“A buckshot with a mixture of six elements huh. Well, we will just do Shiki's plan with all we have.” (Makoto) “It will be a collaboration work-desu wa ne, Waka-sama.” (Mio)

I look at the shining Root.

The good mood of Mio slightly calmed down my heart.

Chapter 192: A new step

The promised chapter that's four times longer than normal!!

As written above, this is a 52 pages long chapter with 16k words.

This chapter will count as a regular chapter and 2 sponsored chapters, for obvious reasons.

With this, I will be dropping dead for a while. Enjoy the massiveness, and please tell me of any errors I most likely missed, lol.

(...In other words, what do you mean?)

This is the answer I gave to Shiki's careful explanation through thought transmission.

No well, I just didn't understand around 20% of it.

I did try my best in listening and understanding it.

The Demon Lord and the Demon Generals seem to be busy throwing out orders, so we don't have much spare time on our part.

That's why he easily accepted the proposal of Shiki.

They are moving in a way that decreases the casualties, and they have judged that there's no demerit in me acting.

And so, there's no problem in me acting.

Is what Shiki said.

(If I am to say only what we will be doing, it would be that instead of using spells, we will be sublimating magic power as material, in that way, we will be able to utilize Waka-sama's magic power amount better.)

(Shiki) (Are you telling me to change the Magic Armor's substance?)

(Makoto)

Right now I am having it materialize as a spell to its limit, so completing it as a spell would be easy but...substance huh.

It sounds difficult.

(Yes. I will do the support for the fine details, so Waka-sama just has to

strongly picture taking that attack of Root-dono without creating any after-wave and concentrate.) (Shiki) Without any after-wave huh.

In that case, it would be fine to just imagine something like a shield or a dome maybe?

In this moments, it is hard to instantly digest it even if he explains the theory behind it.

Honestly speaking, no matter what we are doing, it would help me a lot if they tell me in a simple way.

I have already shown my intend to follow Shiki's plan, so it is even more important.

Anyways, the countermeasure for the crazy blaze of Root has been decided.

What Mio will be doing has already been decided as well.

"Then, I will be try and do it. Even if it doesn't, there's meaning in trying. Mio, try to deflect it so the attack concentrates on me, okay?" (Makoto)
"Can I erase it if I can?" (Mio)

"Of course. Only if you can, and don't push yourself." (Makoto)

"Understood. I will do my best-desu wa." (Mio)

Mio doing a cute guts pose is something that I don't normally see from her, but it helped me release the tension in my body.

Truly dependable.

(I am sorry to interrupt you in the middle of your pleasant chat, but it is already reaching the limit of my charge. I will be shifting to the next phase. A bit more and I will shoot.) (Root) A casual thought transmission came from the dragon, Root, that is within the sublime light.

(...Don't 'I will shoot' me! You pervert that can't read the mood. Just because you are going to disappear anyways doesn't mean that you can just be so casual!) (Makoto) (I do feel sorry, like seriously. At this rate, Crimson Red might die again, so this time I will owe you quite a debt for this. But it has an enforcing power that even I can't go against, so this

blaze is one of my strongest area of effect attacks. I didn't think there would be a time when I would actually use it...and that makes me a bit excited you see.) (Root) At the beginning he sounded apologetic, but at the latter part he turned defiant.

He is genuinely a loss cause.

Yeah, I have confirmed this truth once again.

Just how much distance do you think there is between here and the mountain I delivered the egg of Crimson Red?

This is already not at the level of a summoned beast. That's a totally different dimension of effective range.

(At least tell me the details!) (Makoto)

(I already told you that it is a buckshot of six elements.) (Root)

(Then why are you looking upwards?) (Makoto)

If it's a blaze, you would normally point this way and go dokaan, right?

And yet, Root is pointing his mouth upwards.

The light ball that was inside the opened mouth of his, is slowly ascending and growing.

It is quite unrestful.

(That's to increase the scope of it even more.) (Root)

(...Then why is there another power being created at your mouth?) (Makoto)

(That's to increase the firepower of the resulting attack. In a fight, we dragons like to roar after all) (Root) (...Is that the preparation for a roar?) (Makoto)

Now that he mentions it, the roars of a Superior Dragon...I feel like I have not received a proper one aside from Grount-san.

Jin and the others received a trauma from the roar of a low dragon, but I wonder what kind of power will the roar of Root possess?

(By the way, to increase the dramatic effect, I am doing an attack that takes time to do. I want it to be impressive you see. In other words, I was aiming for an attack that you will unconsciously look at it when shot!)

(Root) (I honestly want to punch your husband.) (Makoto)

Just how much game logic level of destruction was he planning on spreading?!

!!

Root's wings shone brighter within the light.

(...He was a nice guy that you would have liked. Don't say something so sad. Now then, it is the 'beginning' of the fireworks. Well, it is not a power that you guys can do something about, so just enjoy it.) (Root) The moment when the rainbow colored ball continued to rise till disappearing within the clouds, the place began to oscillate.

A trembling that reverberates within the body, like the one of a really low bass.

At the same time, something incredibly unpleasant enveloped my whole body.

With a slightly late squall, the roar of a rampaging beast reaches my ears.

I am sure of it.

This is the roar of that guy!

(Mio, Shiki, are you okay?) (Makoto)

(Of course-desu) (Mio)

(...It is a bit harsh. It has terrifying pressure and it is a storm of abnormal status effects. With lower resistance, it feels like it will draw you closer to death.) (Shiki) ...

Maybe because I am not self-aware of it, I didn't think of this as such a danger.

Hearing this from Shiki, I feel uneasiness.

Depending on the effective range of it, the situation will become even worse.

This kind of sense that differs from an ordinary person can also be considered a weakness of mine.

(Root! What's the effective range of this roar?!)(Makoto)

(...)

(Hey, are you ignoring me?!)(Makoto)

(...)

Tch!

Is he in a trance or something? Root is just looking at a point in the sky and continuing with his mouth opened.

There's no reaction or movement.

The last thing he said was fireworks. Just how far is he going to mess around!

When he said fireworks, was he referring to the last attack?

Hm.

Wait.

If that's the case, is that ball going to bloom in the sky?

...As a buckshot?!

How ill natured!!

(Mio, sorry but that blaze is probably going to fall in quite a wide range. It might be hard to deal with, but I am counting on you.) (Makoto) (Yes, leave it to me.) (Mio)

Now then, soon I will have Shiki...

Eh? A thought transmission from Zef?

(Your Majesty, is something the matter?)(Makoto)

While being cautious of the next move of Root, I respond to Zef.

Zef should be busy with giving orders, so I wonder what business he has.

(Raidou-dono, are you able to deal with the Myriad Color Dragon's roar?) (Zef)

(No, we are cautious of its next move, so stopping the roar is...)
(Makoto)

(...No, this one meant if you are able to resist it, but it seems it was unnecessary worry huh. This one doesn't know what you intend to do, but if you are able to show at least a bit of result, it would be an heroic action. No need to hesitate. This one wants you to do as you wish.) (Zef) I have been given permission once again.

What a relief.

(I will do what I can. Well then.) (Makoto)

(Yeah, sorry for interrupting you in this busy time. Coercion, paralysis, petrification, panic, weakening lvl 5 curse disease, spiritual ailment lvl 6 curse disease, bodily function decrease, magic power effectiveness decay... there's still more, but the ones this one has been able to identify are already crazy. What an unbelievable roar. There's already casualties. Please be careful. Raidou-dono's group, don't push yourselves. This one doesn't mind if you secure your own safety first. This one...wishes you good luck.) (Zef) (...Yeah. Thanks for your care.) (Makoto)

...Root.

You really did quite the messed up attack.

To cast curse disease from a roar.

You probably don't know how much I hate curse diseases, but right now, I am thinking of definitely crushing your attack.

I have gotten quite a lot of resolve.

(Now then, Waka-sama. Please imagine stopping the attack that's gathering from Root and dispersing it, and send that image to your Magic Armor. As long as you strongly think of it, I will support you on the remaining.) (Shiki) (Understood. Mio, prepare for the attack and grasp the

surroundings, and tell Shiki and I that information through linking. Shiki, you will be doing the support and the analysis of Root's attack. I will be using [Sakai] and concentrate only in my spell.) (Makoto) Seeing the two nodding, I was relieved and turn my attention to me and my Magic Armor.

I turn everything to within me.

It is my specialty.

Image.

An image of stopping the gathering attack.

"9th Step 'Gemini', release. 'Being that supplements and fulfills, Servant'." (Shiki) "Sky thread, fill. 'Black Sky Network'." (Mio)

I feel the activation of power pretty close.

Shiki uses Gemini and turns into two.

Mio places a web in the sky.

When I look up, as far in the sky as I could see, I could tell that Mio's power had been activated.

I silently dive within myself.

I make my image stronger.

I alter the Magic Armor and reinvent it, its substance.

Shield...no.

Web...no.

Mirror...no.

None felt right.

I need a stronger embodiment of power.

Something big that can 'hold' and crush any attack.

Destroy the attack.

I think that's the most fitting image required right now.

Right.

I remember the figure of that four armed giant that can be called the symbol of power, I remember the gauntlets that he has equipped in those arms.

That's it.

Arm.

Strong, rustic, and in part, inorganic.

A fine arm like that of Io that instills trust.

An arm that would make one think is a human-shaped weapon; make that image bigger, and then stronger.

Something that would destroy anything that's caught between its palm... let's create such an arm.

I have decided.

Next, I enlarge the arm of the Magic Armor just like that, and then shape it.

After that, I just have go deeper, deeper.

I lead myself towards the state I have when immersing myself in a fight.

I feel the aria of Shiki from quite far back.

While I pave the beastly road that's in my heart, Shiki follows with his aria.

It is not only one.

Shiki is pacing with Gemini and was processing at triple the speed.

The figure of those two voicing out loud their aria was like that of a chorus.

Aside from using it as a scapegoat, he said that he is able to place an ability in Gemini before its activation. It seems like this time's type is the ability to process spells.

(Waka-sama, is it okay-desu ka?) (Mio)

Mio's thought transmission.

In the first place, because of Root's roar, it is a situation where we can't properly hear the voice of anyone, so using thought transmission is obvious.

Shiki's aria as well, I am just looking at the magic power flow and deciphering from it, so I am not actually listening to it.

(...What?) (Makoto)

(That pervert's roar-desu. It feels like it is not only going for the demon race city, but expanding even more. At this rate, the attack will also...)

(Mio) (Root brings trouble through and through huh. It feels like it brings instant death to normal people, and it looks like there's already casualties. Understood. I will see if I can do something about it.) (Makoto) The people at the towns also follow the principle of power, so they probably won't complain even if they die, but even if the town is fine, for the people to be wiped out is not fun.

I don't know if I am able to erase the roar that's already in effect, but I do have the means, so I let's try it.

(No, it seems like the attack range will be increasing, so I don't know if I will be able to cover for it. And so, I was wondering if I can take a bit of power from Waka-sama.) (Mio) As if saying the casualties in the towns are of no matter, Mio easily denies my words.

In exchange, what she said was that she wanted me to lend her power.

(Power, as in magic power?) (Makoto)

(Yes, if you do that, I will be able to bring out more power. Of course, it will burden Waka-sama, so it is only if I receive your permission though.)

(Mio) If it's magic power, I don't mind.

As long as I don't need to do much. It is something that's overflowing with no end in sight anyways.

If there's use to it, I don't mind at all.

(It is fine, use as much as you want.) (Makoto)

(Thank you very much!! Then, facing me...right, should I say it is like

opening a valve? Ah, right! This link that Waka-sama and I -and the extra Shiki-are connected to, imagine as if the one between us is thicker and release it, please!) (Mio) (Understood.) (Makoto)

While holding doubts of Mio who is strangely exalted and happy, I decide to finish the request of Mio first, since I was feeling a strange pressure from the creation of the arm.

Just like Mio told me, I use the information link that she had connected to Shiki, her, and I; and concentrating in that line, I face Mio and release the magic power, or more like, I imagine pouring it onto her.

(Fuh~ufufufu! It is here, Waka-sama's magic power! This is the best-desu~It is delicious and feels good-desu~. With this, there's nothing I can't do!) (Mio) ...

Well, I won't delve deeper into it.

If she has gotten stronger, then there's no problem.

(...Sorry Waka-sama, can I ask you to do that to me as well?) (Shiki)

(Shiki too?) (Makoto)

(Resisting the roar of Root-dono is proving more difficult than I thought, and the support from the aria is running late. I want to prepare the best as possible.) (Shiki) (Okay.) (Makoto)

I pour magic power to Shiki the same way as Mio.

It is like opening a cork, so it is close to sharing.

(This is...you have saved me, Waka-sama. With this, I will be able to support plenty enough!) (Shiki) (Even so, it feels like there's some sort of obstruction in the creation of the arm, a strange sensation. Is this also because the support of Shiki is running late?) (Makoto) The arm of the Magic Armor has already doubled in size.

Compared to the other parts, its density has increased, moreover, it has already begun taking the form of the image I have.

But when I try to make it more precise and imagine it as a substance, there's some sort of strange intermittent noise interrupting.

It disturbs my concentration and it doesn't proceed as I want.

I am leaving the aria crude and putting my concentration depth as priority, so maybe this is the recoil for leaving the fine details to Shiki?

(Noise...Yeah, that's probably the case. Waka-sama, once more. Please try to form that arm.) (Shiki) (Understood. Just that, now I have something extra to do, so I will reduce the speed a bit. And Shiki, you also continue with the analysis of Root's attack, okay?) (Makoto) (Understood.)

The aria support of Shiki has increased in speed instantly.

It is still slower than my concentration, but I will be going slower from now on, so Shiki might be faster after that.

I look at my surroundings.

The buildings at the surroundings have begun crumbling.

There's nothing above us, and we have properly secured our footing, but the people that are running must be having it rough.

Zef has gathered with the Demon Generals, and it seems they have already finished creating a barrier to protect themselves.

Rona seems to have suffered quite a deep wound. It doesn't look like she is participating in it and stays lying down.

The other three and the Demon Lord were deploying the spell.

Moreover, thought transmissions are flying around. Obviously, in this situation I am not thinking of peeking, but I can easily tell that the situation is dire.

Okay, let's do it then.

I maintain my natural posture and lift my hand.

I open up my fist and call my weapon.

In time, a familiar sensation is finally felt in both of my hands.

The sensation of a bow.

I put the Uchine that appeared at my right hand to my waist, and hold only Azusa which is at my left hand.

I don't face it towards Root. I simply point it forward.

Even if Sensei has taught me, it is just a ceremonial gesture.

I have already forgotten the details of the etiquette after all.

I am actually putting magic power into it and expecting actual effects though.

While concentrating in having it reach as far as possible, I pull the bow without placing any arrow and the bowstring rings.

The bowstring trembles, and when it calmed down, I did it again.

I repeated this three times.

The bow ringing ceremony.

I wonder how much it will increase the effectiveness.

When I was thinking that, the support spell of Shiki increased in speed by a lot.

Honestly speaking, it was clearly faster than me.

Oh?

(Root-dono's roar is already showing no effects in my body! Is this what you were intending to do, Waka-sama?!) (Shiki) For the time being, it seems like it was effective for Shiki who is close.

Right now I am concentrating [Sakai] completely into forming the arm, so I don't know much of the situation at town, but it is fine to just have it reach there.

Okay then, since Shiki has already caught up, I will not care about the noise and do it all in one go.

A bothersome thought transmission of Zef was send to me, but I am concentrating right now, so I ignore it and aim to finish forming the arm.

After stopping this, I will save the people that are being assailed by the

curse disease, and then I will go to Rotsgard– “?!!”

From Root’s mouth, a laser-like blaze like that of Crimson Red was spit out.

It flashily tears through the sky and pierces through the rainbow colored ball that was slightly up.

It’s been awhile since I have seen the blue sky.

And then, from the pierced ball, it really rained down like a firework. Buckshots, buckshots, buckshots everywhere...

This is...there’s a lot more than I thought and the range is bigger as well!

The thick web was steadily being destroyed, and from the sky, a rainbow colored self-styled blaze was raining down to the earth.

Instead of calling it a blaze, this is more like a volcano eruption!!

“As expected, what you do is impressive-desu wa ne, pervert! Even so, learn that it is impossible to steal the march on me today!” (Mio) Mio matches the scope of the raining buckshot and instantly expands the web that she set up in the sky.

I can tell that my magic power is flowing to Mio.

The amount is not that much so I don’t mind, but by using that, the black thread web expanded and received the buckshots.

The ones that fell in the spaces at the middle of the web were also stopped by a mysterious light pattern, and not a single one fell to the ground.

“Ah!!”

Eh.

In a moment, the voice of Mio resounded and had a spaced out expression.

I chase her gaze and look afar.

A single rainbow colored ball escaped from the web and fell at the horizon.

I haven't been there, so I don't know what's there though.

At the very least, it's not the mountain of Crimson Red nor is there a demon race town.

(Mio, you don't need to mind it. Right now concentrate in maintaining that web, and having the attack face towards me.) (Makoto) (Yeah...I am very sorry.) (Mio)

The thickness of that pillar of light that was created could be clearly seen even from here.

The vibration and sound came with a time-lag.

One hit is like that?

If all the several hundreds that are at the sky fall at once, not only will the vegetation be wiped out, even the ground wouldn't remain.

I was honestly amazed by the crazy attack of Root who has already disappeared from sight.

Oh well, Tomoe will probably be scolding him before us in Rotsgard.

We will leave the scolding of that guy for later.

More importantly, there's no spare time.

Moreover, the noise has been becoming steadily worse.

If this were a radio, it would be at a level where I would have long given up on listening to it. If it were a tv, it would be in the point where it is almost at the lost signal.

Is it some sort of barrier against anything regarding the formation of substance?

No matter the reason, I must do a strenuous effort in my concentration and strengthen my image.

Changing magic power into substance is quite harsh.

(Shiki, the noise is still terrible. I will try doing it in one go but, is it okay?) (Makoto) (...Yes. Please continue as you wish.) (Shiki)

(Thanks) (Makoto)

I close my eyes and dive deeply inside myself.

I use one hand to cut off and shut all that noise that's interrupting incessantly.

With my remaining hand, I brush off the haziness from my image, and do my best to expose the full picture of it.

I concentrate only in that task.

When I shut up the noise and properly point my concentration, it was easy.

There was a haziness that was difficult to brush away, and there were so many vague shadows on it that it was incredibly hard to get a full picture of the arm.

Desperately, with the sensation of diving into the depths of water, I do my best to grasp that distant shadow.

I don't know how far Shiki is accompanying me, but that moment came.

It was a moment that I felt lasted very long.

I once again felt gratitude towards Mio who is holding back the attack properly.

I can do it.

A rough pair of arms that one can even feel wickedness from them.

Those were truly the arms of a robot.

The arms of a machine that has been excessively ornamented.

An organic sensation can't be felt.

Now then, let's touch it.

Let's create this.

I silently touch the arm that is shining silver.



This is it, is what I thought.

A while after Waka-sama had closed his eyes, the two arms of the Magic Armor detach, get huge, and complex features appear on it.

At the same time, an intense creak like that of a scream resounded in the place.

Different from the roar of Root-dono, it didn't have any sort of added effect, and it was purely a pain in the ears.

I know what this is.

Not much after, Waka-sama opened his eyes.

He tells me of his success with his eyes.

My mouth was busy with chanting the aria, so I respond with a nod, and put my strength to carry out the little support remaining.

With thought transmission I would have been able to respond with words, but right now I didn't even have the power to do something like that.

Waka-sama broke through the obstructive noise and grabbed the path to this spell, no, this deed.

I also have a guess on what that obstructive noise might be.

Splendid.

Later, as long as I finish the support in my aria, things will be wrapped up.

I who has created a double by using the power of the ring, have endowed it with the ability for spell support this time.

Doing the processing ability of more than two people at once, I provide a small assistance.

The more complicated the magic is, the more important the beginning is.

Waka-sama normally praises me as being amazing for accomplishing my tasks smoothly, but the one that's truly impressive is Waka-sama.

Within his pitch dark path, he gropes for new avenues, and creates a path in a pathless way.

And he advances through it without hesitating.

To smoothen things in a place where there's already a path created, may be necessary, but as long as there's technique, anyone would be able to do that.

When I am able to help Waka-sama, I always end up being consecutively surprised, and it is also an irreplaceable learning experience.

And, I finally finish all the support necessary.

The Demon Lord and Demon Generals that are able to be in this place are truly lucky.

Rona who is in this place but has no consciousness is quite the unlucky one.

Now, witness it.

Our master's new step.

From the fingers of the pair of arms that have detached of the Magic Armor, an alteration begins.

I can tell that excitement was running through my body.

There's already no need to call it with a deceiving word like alteration.

For the sake of not creating weight in Waka-sama, I changed the way of saying it, and had explained it in a more simple way, but...

"He was able to. In a body that's not of a God...Just how far can a human go?"

He is not even a Graunt.

As a human, no matter how much assistance one receives, to be able to achieve this...

Just how much possibilities are lying in that body of his.

My interest doesn't run out.

This is why I can't stop serving Waka-sama.

"Right right. That is the vessel of creation; the ability to give concrete form from an image." (Shiki) Looking at the arm that's shining silver, I felt tears welling up.

The ear piercing noise was the cry of the world.

The obstructing noise was probably the resistance of the world.

Without the qualifications and leaving it to raw magic power and spell technique, the world must have rejected it.

But Waka-sama has crushed it.

He shut it up.

With only his own will and power.

I see. He is an abnormal one, so he will probably be able to go against the Goddess.

While being honored to be a follower of such a person, I look at Waka-sama who has done a great exploit.

"...Waka-sama?!"

"Waka-sama! What's wrong?!"

Right at this moment, Waka-sama had bent his knees and was about to fall!

My voice and Mio-dono's voice had overlapped.

(I am okay! I am just a bit tired. You two, please don't lower your guards.) (Makoto) A deathly pale face. Looking at his figure that is sweating profusely, I can't think of him as being okay at all.

But this person is not someone that would say this out loud.

When he is truly in pain, he will hide his true feelings; that's the kind of person he is.

That's why I need to do a complete follow-up later.

Right now, I have to concentrate in my master's great exploit, and the

way he will utilize it.

There's still one job remaining that my master has left me.

(Mio, please have all of the attack face me and have it pass.) (Makoto)

(Is your body...no, I understand.) (Mio)

Because the thought transmission has been left open for all three of us, I am able to hear the words of Waka-sama as well.

It seems like he will finally use that arm.

(Shiki, hurry and analyse that attack. Well, it is in proximity, so I think that if it's Shiki, it will be fine though. Then, create a mix element that can go against it and extinguish it.) (Makoto) A mix element that can go against Root-dono's blaze?!

Even if it is being blocked by Mio-dono in the sky, I will have to do that against something that has been perfected to a point of being art?!

It is impossible.

No matter what I do, I wouldn't be able to.

It isn't something that can be done with elements.

(Waka-sama, I am sorry, but that's impossible. I will hurry and analyse it, but even if I am able to do it well, it would just end up as a downgraded version.) (Shiki) (Then it doesn't have to be an opposite, anything is fine. I don't care if it's just something that can extinguish that thing. Even if the power is not enough, I will take care of it. Shiki just has to take care of the balance in the elements. Find an adjustment that can turn that thing into zero.) (Makoto) H-He is being unreasonable.

Even so...it is certainly true that it is not impossible to create an element balance that can erase a specific attack.

If it were a completely opposing element, there's the need to be on the level of art, but if it's just something that erases the other, then it should be fine.

In that case, if I at least have the information, I might be able to do

something.

But what does he mean when he said that even if the power is not enough, he will take care of it?

(...I will try.) (Shiki)

No matter, I will just follow the idea of my master.

But I wonder how far I can go.

(If you want to, you can also do the same as Mio to power up Gemini.)
(Makoto)

(To take more magic power from Waka-sama who is clearly tired already, is just...) (Shiki) Knowing that it will burden him, makes it even harder to do.

(I am saying it is okay, so don't worry. I will also have this arm do its job, and I also have work to do.) (Makoto) Work again.

Is he assuming that there's still more?

...

I see, the time-lag attack of Root-dono might be...

I did think that it was a roar followed by a blaze, but he didn't say that the time-lag would only be once.

(Waka-sama, I will be dropping them. While I was blocking them, I ate around ten of them-I mean, I erased them, but it will be difficult to do more than that. I have decided to depend on your words.) (Mio) As expected of Mio-dono.

To customize the spell that was already activated and from that distance, and she was able to deal with the light balls.

The spells that Mio-dono uses are all originals, and most of them use arias that I practically don't understand their meaning.

At times, Waka-sama speaks with Mio-dono about arias, but for the unskilled me, it only sounded like a puzzling conversation.

It makes me envy well-rounded talent and power.

(It is fine to depend on me at times you know. I am always being spoiled by you guys after all. Do it.) (Makoto) “Black Sky Network, distortion release.” (Mio)

With Mio’s words, a part of the sky that was covered by a black web almost as if it was covering the whole sky, faded from the sky until the point it couldn’t be seen anymore.

And the art-like mix element buckshot was heading towards us in its entirety, accurately speaking, towards Waka-sama, and it once again began to fall.

The rainbow colored buckshot rains down towards one point.

That sight was illusory, and I who was at the crashing point, had gulped my breath from the sheer beauty.

But sadly, it was different for the leading actor of this place.

Waka-sama’s two arms that are floating in air a few meters ahead of him, they left a space in between the hands as if they were about to applaud.

Aiming at that space, the first shot of Root-dono’s blaze came.

!!

Incredible.

There’s nothing in the space of the two arms.

There’s nothing, and yet, a little before reaching that area, it headed towards the space in between the hands as if being sucked in, and there, it was compressed to the size of a human fist and stopped in place.

Second shot, third shot, fourth shot...

The shots that were coming one after the other have faced the same fate, and the buckshot that surpassed a hundred had turned into one. Even if it was steadily getting bigger, it was only as big as the head of a person.

My first guess was that he would imagine a giant shield or something resembling a mantle, but it was actually an arm that resembled a giant

gauntlet.

And it was stopping the shots with an unbelievable method into one place, and shutting it out without creating any damage to the surroundings.

Ah, I see.

This resembles the time when he was fighting the Demon Generals and crushed the lava ball in the Magic Armor's hand.

That was with one hand, but Waka-sama has stored all the shots into that space, and maybe he intends to crush it with those two arms?

(Shiki, I can understand your happiness in seeing that it is working, but please don't watch in fascination and continue the analysis. Are you doing it?) (Makoto) (O-On my way!) (Shiki)

(I am counting on you. When Shiki's analysis finishes, I will try extinguishing this. Being able to do this far can already be considered a success, and it is Root, so he will probably be doing a finishing blow.) (Makoto) (I don't think Root-dono is such a persistent type though.) (Shiki)

(Instead of Root, I am more worried about the data he used as reference. He has a tendency to reproduce it to a level that is verbose.) (Makoto) (Hah...) (Shiki)

I don't understand the foundation of Waka-sama, but I hurry my analysis.

It has natural features of fire and water, and it also has light and darkness.

Even though it has elements that repulse each other, it has an abnormal balance that makes them mutually increase their power and it is creating power enough to turn castles and towns into ashes.

If someone touches this, that person will truly disappear.

Root-dono also has an evil disposition.

No matter how many possibilities the Scepter had to go through in order

to draw this one, in the end, it will end up killing the magician and everything else.

When thinking that this is a sacred treasure from Elysion which is the place that held its faith in the Goddess, I just don't understand the aim of it.

Even if Elysion relied on it, relied on the many dragons, and continued to utilize it; and at the end this were to activate...

There's the chance that Elysion wouldn't have fallen by the hands of the demon race, but by their very sacred treasure.

No, don't delve deep into it.

Leaving aside the future, the past has already been set.

I just have to search the element that will serve as the natural enemy of this thing.

"I have caught everything. Now I will...!" (Makoto)

Waka-sama was steadily squeezing the space in between the hands.

The merged buckshot of Root-dono seems to be showing resistance. It twitches and swells at times, but it is unable to escape from the domain that it is encased in.

"This is incredibly tiring...but!!" (Makoto)

I honestly don't know how much magic power the deed of Creation consumes.

Because even the Gods of a different world have recognized the magic power of Waka-sama, I thought that it would be impossible for it to not be enough, and that's why I decided that it was possible to utilize this moment for Waka-sama to do a step up.

Did I make some sort of miscalculation?

Or was the created thing bad?

...The magic power of Waka-sama, the thing that has no ceiling, has been whittled down till a point I can measure.

Even so, to our perspective, it is a domain that's still far into the skies for us.

But this is the first time that it has reached a point where even I can measure it.

Agitation is born within me.

It is telling me that this is no time to be easygoing.

I was unable to stop that agitation from reaching the point of disturbing my concentration.

(Shiki, calm down. It is okay. It is going well after all.) (Makoto)

Along with Waka-sama's words, a massive amount of magic power flows to my body.

A comfortable and peculiar sensation of great happiness envelops my body. I could tell that it was enough to erase my uneasiness.

(Waka-sama currently has a lot of magic power decreased. There's no need to do something like this!) (Shiki) (It is certainly true that when I created that arm, around half of my magic power was taken away, and I think this is the first time in my life that I have lost this much magic power. I have heard this from the academy students, it seems like when magic power is about to dry up, one will experience deficiency in his physical condition as well. But it is not something that Shiki, the leading actor in this occasion, has to worry about. My job is already practically over after all.) (Makoto) (A leading actor, that's just—!) (Shiki)

(I can tell that I can't use these arms for long. To use something in real combat when it hasn't been combat proven yet, I feel someone like Eris will be doing a tsukkomi about this later.) (Makoto) Combat...No, leaving that aside, I have to hurry.

There's no helping it now that I have received it.

The magic power that is flowing from Waka-sama is not heading to the already deployed Gemini, but to me. Accurately speaking, to the thirteen steps rings.

This magic power that I am so familiar with because of the ruling pact, is being amplified by the rings and send to my body.

A sensation of almightyness reverberates in my whole body, and the analysis of the element accelerated at once.

Light and darkness was paired up with a mysterious balance like that of yin yang to form the foundation, it mutually intersected with each other and synergised.

In these, four elements were added.

Water to wind, wind to fire, fire to earth, earth to water; all four assisted and enhanced each other. The strengthened elements assist even more, and were increasing the power of each other continuously like a spiral.

The more I see it, the more artistic it looked.

But if I just need to return it to nothingness...

I search for the two elements that are able to destroy the foundation of light and darkness.

And then, I search for the element that will destroy the first cardinal point, the water that the wind receives.

Hurry, hurry.

This is not impatience. I reasonably increase the processing speed, and continue searching for the elements that can destroy them.

Light and darkness, and then fire; the third element that is serving as a support.

I have found it.

With this ratio, I should be able to extinguish that blaze!

“Waka-sama, I did it!” (Shiki)

“With this! Disappear!!!” (Makoto)

He must have been waiting for my words.

The voice of Waka-sama soon resounded afterwards.

Within the clapping two silver arms, the rainbow light ball didn't explode anywhere and was simply extinguished.

With his breathing ragged, but without bending his knees again, Waka-sama proceeds to the next action.

I felt pity towards the tenacious opposition that has really done an attack against that defense.

Also, I am deeply grateful that I am the ally of this person.

(Mio, how is it?) (Makoto)

(The ascension has stopped. It is coming!) (Mio)

(As I thought!) (Makoto)

With the conversation of Waka-sama and Mio-dono, for the first time, I noticed what those two were conscious about.

I am also linked, so as long as I turned my awareness towards it, I would have noticed. What a blunder.

The laser-like attack that Root-dono shot to create this buckshot attack, it has reached towards starry sky, and had begun falling.

That also has a similar core to that of the buckshot.

And maybe that's what has made it change from ascension to descension?

But Waka-sama has his arms...

They have fallen.

The two silver arms don't show any signs of moving and have fallen to the ground.

I can't feel power from it at all.

I remember the words of Waka-sama: 'I can't use them for long'.

There's the chance that Waka-sama is exhausted to the point that there's a need to change the plan to my element analysis.

My responsibility is big.

But the balance of the element I will be creating can't stop the last attack of Root-dono.

There's the need of another card.

(Looking at the acceleration, it would take around three minutes to reach here.) (Shiki) (Three minutes huh. Mio, sorry but can you please buy a bit more time. You don't have to worry about my magic power.) (Makoto) (...Understood. My web isn't suit against attacks with high penetration power, but I will try-desu wa.) (Mio) (I am counting on you. Shiki, endow the element you created to my arrow.) (Makoto)

Waka-sama had taken a stance with Azusa.

At his right hand there's the dagger with a string attached that's called Uchine.

That right hand is facing Azusa, and when he places it on the bowstring, it stretches into a straight line, turning into a makeshift arrow.

Waka-sama who has already finished the process of pointing it high in the sky, slowly marks his aim as he pulls the bow.

So this is what he meant when he said he would be taking care of the power huh.

I see.

So in the last attack, instead of stopping it first, he intended to extinguish it right away huh.

His outlook in this extreme situation, if he were able to exhibit this ability in other fields aside from battle, I feel like he would be able to become anything he wants.

...Fuh~, because that's not the case, he is our master Makoto-sama huh.

Three minutes is short for me.

I use Gemini and begin forming an endowing spell as fast as possible but prioritizing that the element doesn't break.

Waka-sama told me to endow the spell, but since I will be endowing it to

the arrow that Waka-sama is drawing, it is best to form the endowing spell instead of placing an endowing spell that increases its power.

If what I will be endowing already possesses an unparalleled strength, putting more power to it is unnecessary.

It is okay to just concentrate on accurately endowing the element.

Waka-sama's presence suddenly grows thin.

No matter how many times I see it, it is a sensation that's bad for my heart.

It is proof that the bow wielding Waka-sama has deepened his concentration.

"Just in time huh. Waka-sama said to wait for a bit more-desu yo!" (Mio)

Mio-dono reduces the scope of the black web she set in the sky and activates it.

There, a rainbow colored light streak pierces.

As expected, it seems that this attack is lower in power than that of the condensed attack of before.

Even so...

The power it has in a single point is strong to no compare.

"Kuh!!" (Mio)

The web that was able to take on all those attacks was being pushed back by the light streak and was losing its form.

Mio-dono was also showing a pained expression.

Is it possible that it will break through?

"Shiki, you were thinking about something rude, right?! I will punish you later! Something of this level...in this day where I have received the power of Waka-sama!! I will definitely not permit it, with my obstinacy as a woman at stake!!" (Mio) ...This is something I think every time, but I am confident in my poker face. And yet, why is it that Mio-dono and Tomoe-dono are always able to easily see through me?

If I am punished today or scolded, it is possible that I will really be visiting the otherside.

Also, no matter how I see it, she is being overmatched.

Mio-dono who is able to actually hold out temporarily, can already be considered a miracle. Being able to hold without it being broken is already good.

“Be obedient!!” (Mio)

The pushing back has...stopped.

Even though it is already abnormal to be able to activate such a spell from such a distance.

Not only Waka-sama, even the backs of the senpais I am supposed to be chasing are this far huh.

I look at Mio-dono with admiration and respect.

That figure of hers glaring at the sky was different from her usual self.

“Mio-dono, that hair...” (Shiki)

While in the middle of my aria, I unconsciously ask this.

Her hair has turned long and is now flowing till her waist.

Even though she was like always just a few moments ago.

“Ara, it has grown. Well, it is something trivial-desu wa. More importantly, Shiki, hurry up.” (Mio) Is it trivial?

“Besides, your hair as well, has impertinently turned into a black color like mine and Waka-sama’s. Whatever it may be, it is okay to just mind it later. If by some chance, you are to mess up in the time I am holding here...you understand, right?” (Mio) Hair?

Mine?

Black?

N-No, right now I should just hurry with the completion of the spell.

“Shiki, when you are finished with the spell, do it immediately, please.

Mio, hold for a bit longer, okay?” (Makoto) “U-Understood!” (Shiki)

“As long as you wish, just leave it to me.” (Mio)

After those words of Mio-dono, her glare was telling me to finish as fast as possible.

I understand.

Waka-sama is maintaining his state with the bow while silently looking at the light streak.

He is probably ready already.

Soon after, I complete my spell, and endow it to Waka-sama’s Uchine that has turned into an arrow.

“Then, Mio, release it.” (Makoto)

“Yes!” (Mio)

“Fuh~”

While still silent, Waka-sama exhales and shoots the arrow.

It is rainbow colored just like the light streak and only a long straight line, but it pushed on towards the light streak of the same color and overlapped with each other.

I stopped my breathing and was over watching this, seeing the impudent light extinguish in an instant and only the flash of light in the sky remaining, I was deeply relieved.

That’s great. It succeeded.

“As expected of Shiki. But the Uchine has been scattered away. I have to apologize to the Eldwas and have them make another one...” (Makoto)

“Yes, the arrow that I endowed and Waka-sama hit in the blank has no rival.” (Shiki) Since it was able to do this much, the Eldwas shouldn’t complain about a weapon or two breaking.

They would actually welcome it with wide smiles.

“That was splendid. Even so, it would have been a bit more easy if we had the High Spirits help out. Seriously, they are all talk only.” (Mio) “Mio-

dono, their own temples are in the city, so I think that it can't be helped that they would try to protect their surroundings as much as possible.”
(Shiki) Phoenix and Behemoth rejected our request for cooperation.

Waka-sama didn't really seek it, but Mio-dono and I requested for their help.

But their answer was no.

The reason was because their own temple was within the range of attack.

It may be a limited scope, but they wanted to prioritize the protection of their area.

It's not like Mio-dono and I control them, so it is an incredibly reasonable answer to say that they have business to do, so it is impossible.

And when faced with an attack of this range and their temples are within it, more so.

And in truth, the people that ran to the temples when Root-dono's roar occurred, have somehow survived, so there's no doubt that it is working as a refuge location.

It is questionable how many shots that evacuation point would be able to take, but in terms of result, it was correct to not force them to come.

“Well, it isn't going to end in death anyways.”

“And it isn't like death is gonna end us.”

Is what they both said.

After all, there's the Phoenix that seems to revive, and the avatar of earth that controls undead as well; so those words can be said to be peculiar of them.

While having this feeling of exhaustion, I look at the Demon Lord.

They didn't say anything, they simply looked at the sky.

It can't be helped.

Because something that surpasses a war of mortals has occurred after

all.

Waka-sama is quite tired.

Even if we have to postpone our departure day, we will have him rest for today, and maybe I should do the post-processing of the impending events.

Doing at least this much is no problem.

After that, we should retrieve these pair of arms and the artifact that is fallen in an unsightly manner.

It would be problematic to have it abused after all.

I transfer the silver pair of arms that will probably make the Eldwas happy, and the sacred treasure, the Governor Scepter, to Asora.

A strong wind brushes my cheeks.

My hair had clung onto the sweat of my face.

I was about to wipe it away because of the unpleasantness, and at that moment, I noticed the color of my hair.

It really is black.

Is it the side effect of receiving power from Waka-sama?

I have to investigate this as well...but first I have to deal with the Demon Lord that has begun acting.

Looking at the group that has Zef at the lead, I decided the current move to make.



“With this, Raidou has become the hero of us demon race.”

“He saved the country in its crisis, so it is obvious. Even if he acts as a merchant in the future, he will have no opposition.”

“I heard that Raidou was the one who erased that extraordinary roar in the middle of it.”

“With this, I have learned that tactics and schemes are of no use. And a frontal fight would be absurd. In other words, there’s no hands to play. I

can only laugh at it.”

The Demon Lord and Demon Generals, as well as the guests, Raidou and his two followers, have returned to the city.

After that, Raidou toppled over in the middle of his conversation with Zef, but it was diagnosed that he fainted because of the decline in magic power.

Right now, Raidou is being carried by the Demon Lord Zef, and Zef was talking about the time when he will wake up, and the support in the future.

After a small silence, cheers of joy from the residents had welled up, and just like the roar of Root, it reverberated through the whole city.

The tossing hands of the citizens and that wild enthusiasm had spread through this historical city. And it was a mystery how this would contribute to Raidou and the Kuzunoha Company in the future.

This spectacle was watched by Sari and Lucia from a window of the castle, and even within the noisy interiors of it, they were speaking quietly.

“You two, his Majesty has returned. It will get busy, but anyways, we will be receiving them. Hurry.”

“Understood. Please head there first. We will head there soon.” (Lucia)

“I don’t mind you coming later than us, but not making it in time by the time his Majesty and his guests arrive will not be forgiven.”

“I understand, Ani-sama.” (Sari)

The two return their responses to their brother, and then Sari and Lucia once again look at the Demon Lord group within the enthusiastic citizens, more accurately speaking, they were looking at Raidou who was being carried by the Demon Lord.

“Looking at that fight, and looking at the achievement this time; I have also completely comprehended it myself. We can’t have him as an enemy. For that sake, I think it is fine to pay any sort of price.” (Lucia) “Yeah.” (Sari)

“That’s why, Sari, as I thought, it should be me -not you-who takes on that task. My current self thinks from the depths of my heart that it is fine to live for the sake of that man.” (Lucia) “Yeah, Lucia-anesama won’t do. A person with looks like mine will not be rejected by them.” (Sari) “But...” (Lucia)

“Also...see.” (Sari)

“!! I see. But if you are able to make contact with us, and there’s the need of my help, don’t hesitate to rely on me. Got it, Sari?” (Lucia) “Thanks. When that time comes, I will not hesitate. I promise.” (Sari)

“But you really act fast. Just when...that ritual supposedly needs a part of the target’s body and yet...” (Lucia) Lucia looks at the chest of Sari.

When Sari said ‘see’, she showed a ‘bruise’ that was on her chest.

Looking at it carefully, it had detailed characters inscribed and it formed a complicated pattern.

From afar, it looks like an ellipse, but it looked like a chain necklace with characters coiling around. It was something that couldn’t be called good taste.

It is something that’s engraved from the result of a special ritual, and Lucia knew of the meaning of it.

That’s why she understood that it was too late, and didn’t request Sari to substitute with her.

“Raidou is really thickheaded in that aspect. When we were returning from the temple, I told him that he had some graying hair, and let me take it off.” (Sari) “...When normal, he is really an easy person to deal with.” (Lucia)

“Yeah, easy peasy. But equally scary. First we have to gain trust. Then, our first priority should be to set some demons within their group, even if only a little.” (Sari) “Umu. Well, the only thing I can do is to pray for your success though. Now then, it is time to receive them as well. If we are unable to receive the Demon Lord and the hero that saved us, it will invite antipathy from the populace.” (Lucia) Sari and Lucia hurry to join the

reception.

“...My role is of utmost importance. I won’t be able to return here. But...I am also slightly looking forward to it. What raised Raidou, and just what kind of thinking this person has. My interest doesn’t end.” (Sari) The quiet monologue that Sari leaked out, disappeared inside of her.



“It seems Raidou-dono has woken up.”

Rona who had returned from the guest room, sat down beside Zef and reported this to him.

“Half a day. Quite the fast recovery.”

“If it is them, I can comprehend it though.”

The two who responded immediately were Phoenix and Behemoth.

At that place there’s Zef, Rona, and the High Spirits.

Io and Reft were controlling the chaos, so they weren’t in that place.

Actually, Rona is also in that position as well, but she is present with Zef. In other words, instead of being strange that Io and Reft are not there, it could be said that Rona being there is strange.

By the way, aside from the completely necessary meetings, Mokuren rarely participates.

Research is his objective, and it is also the best way to contribute to his country.

“You two, what do you think of them?” (Zef)

“If you are thinking of taking them in, stop that thought. They are a sword without scabbard. And it is the type that can cut anything into two.”

“Umu. No matter how big the power, if it’s a power that will destroy a country with one mistake, it is not a power that one should possess. In the end, it will only be a danger. If this power is possessed by a mortal.”

“In other words, don’t touch him?” (Zef)

“That’s how it would work. He is a boy that seems easy to guide his thoughts, so you guys are probably thinking about doing a lot of things, but it will be between obtaining everything or losing it all. A bet like that is not something that you should play with all the time. You guys are rebelling against the Goddess, and with that action alone, you have already put your whole race at stake after all.”

“We are not only allies of the demon race. Our original role is to lend our strength to all the races in this land. As we are in that position, we are advising you this, don’t use Raidou for war. Otherwise, we might have to silence you guys as well.”

“...Earth and Fire Spirit-sama are beings that cooperate with us demon race even though you are being criticized by other Spirits. Regarding Raidou, we will mostly be doing that. We won’t be making him participate in the war, and will not try to utilize him.” (Zef) Zef’s words had created an atmosphere of relief from the High Spirits.

Rona was surprised by that.

High Spirits that are existences surpassing that of mortals, are alternating from joy and sorrow because of the acts of a human.

She felt her uneasiness towards the existence called Raidou increase even more.

“Then that’s fine. Not touching Raidou is the best course. We also want to tell the Goddess-sama how we feel, but I don’t know if she will lend an ear...”

The big framed bodies of the High Spirits began to sway and then disappeared.

The talk between demi-humans and High Spirits has ended.

“Even the Spirits fear him, and an existence that makes them want to seek advice from the Goddess huh. This is already a situation that surpasses this one’s understanding, but in that case, those arms that made such a Raidou exhausted to that point...As this one thought...it wasn’t summoning but Creation?” (Zef) “I heard that the magic power

exhaustion was too much for it to be the summoning of a powerful magic tool. But Creation is a technique in the line of Gods. If Raidou was able to do that, that would mean he has begun surpassing the boundaries of a mortal. Isn't that overthinking it?" (Rona) "Fuh...Normally, that would be the case. But with that incident of the dragon army's Governor Scepter, this one ends up pointing it towards that small possibility. It isn't a way of thinking that a Lord should have huh. Forgive this one." (Zef) "To think that the Governor Scepter would call Root, it was also because of my deficiency in research. I thought that it was a fitting object for them to depend on, and I thought that it would be a good opportunity to clean them all out though." (Rona) "That as well. Raidou called it Root in one glance. In other words, there's the chance that he has connections with the being that's considered the summit of dragons. Well, in the present time, there's no proof that it was Root though. This one doesn't think that there are any other dragons capable of replicating that level of attack though." (Zef) "I have already begun the investigation of Root's outward appearance. Even if Raidou is acquainted with Root, his danger level is already at the peak. Right now we have no means to eliminate Raidou, so it wouldn't bring any change, and the only thing it would provide us is confirmation of whether it was actually Root or not." (Rona) "Right. Seriously, my head hurts." (Zef)

"..."

The words of Zef pause, and Rona was silent.

It was an atmosphere saying that this talk of Raidou will not be changing for the better.

"By the way Rona, good work in this time's incident. That you received a grave injury at the end was this one's blunder. Sorry." (Zef) "My whole existence is your Majesty's possession. Please don't mind it. Matters that your Majesty shouldn't dirty his hands in, I will take them all with my own hands. That dirt is my pride." (Rona) "...That's not a reason to be spoiled by you. This one's lack of ability is wounding you. And who knows how much pain is that." (Zef) "I want to see more of the country that your Majesty is creating. I want to do things that will bring you happiness.

That's all there is to it. I...am not serving the demon race or the Demon Lord; I only serve Zef-sama. Spoiling your Majesty is more than I can wish for." (Rona) Rona answers the words of Zef with a cheerful smile.

She, who is able to respond in a variety of situations with any kind of expression, was showing a heartfelt smile that she only shows to Zef.

Their relationship was too deep to be simply that of a Lord and subordinate.

It was an expression that would make people think that.

"...In that case, this one can only reward you by making even a bit of that country this one envisions into reality huh. This one has been blessed with a strict subordinate." (Zef) "Utilize me as you see fit." (Rona)

"Then Rona, what are the current numbers of the rebellion?" (Zef)

"With the other day's attack to your Majesty, all the important people of the radical side have died. We were able to splendidly boil them all down."

(Rona) "That man, if he were to become this one's power, he would have become a reliable subordinate though." (Zef) "A conciliation was

impossible. That man had a profound hatred towards your Majesty after all." (Rona) "Umu, and how much did your 'current position as a member of the rebellion' increase?" (Zef) "The important members were

eliminated, so I think that in terms of weight in decisions, I would be around number one or two. If you give me a few months more, I think I will be able to become the head. I did utilize my position as a Demon General to leak out information and they were able to almost reach the neck of your Majesty after all." (Rona) "If Raidou is the hero of the demon race, you would be the hero of the rebellion huh." (Zef) "It seems like it was good to show them how I covered one attack of your Majesty for one of their members. Even in the people that hold a different opinion, it looks like they have held an image of me protecting their comrades." (Rona) Rona reports with a smile appearing in her face.

The information leak that Zef spoke about before was Rona.

Moreover, it is something that the Lord knew of.

If the rebellion knew of this, just how much despair and how much hatred they would grow to have for Zef and Rona, just trying to imagine it is scary.

“Even if this one missed your vitals in an instant, that made my innards cold.” (Zef) “Mokuren was in that place as well, so I was sure that I wouldn’t die at that moment.” (Rona) “A Demon General that is my close aide is also their ace, so it was plenty enough of a chance to earn the head of the Demon Lord huh. For them, you must be quite the dependable existence.” (Zef) “Is how they must think. In truth, I am controlling the pace of the rebellion, and will never let them get in the way of your Majesty though.” (Rona) “Using a shield to protect one’s body has its limits. The best would be to have a shield and sword to play one’s part after all. It might be a dirty role, but Rona, this one’s counting on you.” (Zef) “Yes. First, I will become the leader of the rebellion. I will lead everything to your Majesty’s will.” (Rona) At the hall where there’s only the two of them, a conversation that could be considered highly classified has finished quietly.



Not only did he fall unconscious and the Demon Lord-sama gave him a princess carry, he also ended up sleeping for a whole one day and a half; I am that Raidou-desu.

I intended for it to be cool, and yet, I messed it up at the very end.

Tomoe was happily saying that I should return quick, when I opened my eyes there was Mio inside my bed, and Shiki seems to have been trying so hard that he had bags in his eyes!

What a fail.

Ah, the long-haired version of Mio had returned to normal by the time I woke up.

Shiki’s black hair returned to red as well.

It seems that change was temporary.

The demon race city was reasonably okay. The buildings and people had

some damage, but there was liveliness.

Zef properly explained our exploits to the citizens, is what I was told, and I thought: what the hell? But when I actually went out for a walk, I understood the meaning.

The food carts that I was jostled into, gave me all the food for free, and not only that, most of it was forcefully fed into my mouth.

It was an incredible torture, I mean, reception.

By the time I was aware, I already had presents and was in front of the castle gates.

That was amazing.

Moreover, because I was surrounded by so many people, I was unable to understand what was going on at all, and yet, my wallet was not pickpocketed.

Even though the demon race settlements don't have much security.

Anyways, it felt like they were saying: we are grateful, you bastard.

Well, I was able to properly block the blaze of Root, so I decided to agree with this amount of appreciation.

When I took a seat for the night banquet, it felt as if the city around the castle joined together to do a big festival, and the night was spend in a grand fashion.

Maybe because the people were told that I was in convalescence, there wasn't anyone who made contact with me aside from Zef and the Demon Generals, and it ended with only gathering attention from afar.

I did say it 'ended as', but personally, the gazes were painful.

In the next morning, Shiki showed me a mountain of letters that were substitutes for the greetings in the banquet.

Every one of them were letters from influential demons of the territory, and were saying things like: please do come have business in our land.

I think it would be good to have the Forest Onis, Gorgons, and Winged-

kins join in groups to check them out in order.

Of course, if we are to make a store in those places, I will have to show my face every now and then, so it is best to not decide quickly about actually putting more stores, and so, I place that thought in the deep recesses of my mind.

There should be no problems in doing peddling for a while.

And so, while it wasn't a proper ending, we safely approached the day we leave the demon city.

Ah, obviously, I told them that it was okay to not have guards in our return.

We are already late in our return, so if we were to take several days even in our return, it would have troublesome effects in my lectures and the Company.

We plan to immediately go to Asora as soon as we are lost into the blizzard.

"Well then your Majesty, it was a long stay, but with this, we will be excusing ourselves." (Makoto) "What a regret. This one wanted Raidou-dono to look at the other towns as well though." (Zef) Zef speaks as if he had lingering feelings, but since the incident of Root, he hasn't spoken about the topic of marriage, and most of the talk was done by Shiki, so for me, he became an incredibly easy person to talk with.

This is probably also a social skill.

"At the next chance, I would like to do that. I did receive passionate invitation letters, so when I arrange some tasks I have, I am thinking about going around the territory." (Makoto) "That will make everyone happy. It will be troublesome, but please do so." (Zef)

"Yes. This generous reception, I, Misumi Raidou, will remember it. Now then, we will be going." (Makoto) Okay, let's return home!

"Ah, please wait, Raidou-dono." (Zef)

Zef calls me to a stop.

“Just one last thing. There’s a gift from the demon race.” (Zef)

...

It is already fine, isn’t it?

Hm...ah, one last thing at the end.

I have a bad feeling about this.

“What is it, your Majesty?” (Makoto)

“...Sari.” (Zef)

“Yes?” (Makoto)

Now that he mentions it, today I haven’t see her.

Sari comes out from within the tumult of people and shows herself.

“...Sari-dono?” (Makoto)

Her figure gave me a bad feeling and I unconsciously call her name.

How to say it...a maid outfit.

No, it is a maid outfit.

It is the clothes that maids from the demon race use. There isn’t much decoration to it and it didn’t have the frills I imagined those kind of clothes to have.

They were pretty plain clothes.

Right now, the clothes that have frills are the ones Akua and Eris combi wear at the fridays they call ‘Maid Day’ in the Company.

There are times when it changes to things like ‘Pajama Day’, so it seems to be pretty random.

Wait, that’s of no importance right now.

The problem is why Sari is wearing those clothes.

“Raidou-dono, no, Goshujin-sama<master>. Just as promised, I will offer you this body of mine, and vow to serve as a chamberlain of yours for the rest of my life.” (Sari) ...

What?

“...Waka-sama, what is the meaning of this?” (Mio)

Mio had a gogogo sfx coming out from her. <An sfx denoting anger.>

But I don't understand the situation at all!

“...Ehm, no, I don't know at all.” (Makoto)

I barely manage to say this.

“Then it is just this girl being crazy-desu ne? I will take care of her quickly.” (Mio) “Please wait, Mio-sama. This ‘promise’ that I mentioned to Goshujin-sama, Mio-sama has also heard of it.” (Sari) “I don't have a single memory of it-desu wa ne. There's a limit to saying nonsense...” (Mio) Without any hesitation, Sari who had her knees and head down, had lifted her head and responded to Mio.

Ah, for a second, I forgot to stop her.

Even though Mio said something dangerous.

An important person of the demon race was about to be killed right in front of their faces by one of my followers.

I was completely frozen.

“At that time in the Spirit Temple rampage, I made an unreasonable request to Goshujin-sama without understanding my own power, moreover, I said: ‘I will definitely return you unwounded. I promise this with my life’, and yet, in the end, I was the one being protected. And so, with this life I betted with, from today on, I am Goshujin-sama's possession.” (Sari) “W-W-What?!”

She said this in one breath, and then, she suddenly opened her clothes and exposed her chest.

...No well, even if she does that, she has a chopping board body so...

I don't feel any lust for it though.

I was purely agitated.

“That is...” (Makoto)

I point at the ellipse-looking thing that's at Sari's chest.

Is that a tattoo?

"It is the proof that I have vowed this life of mine to Raidou-sama. What I did was a ritual that has been passed down in the demon race. It is already showing its effects. Even if I am able to leak information of the demon race to Goshujin-sama, I can't leak information of Goshujin-sama to the demon race. You will be able to utilize me as a convenient pawn without worrying about betrayal." (Sari) "Then just return to the demon race side and live your life as always—" (Makoto)

"That can't be done, Raidou-dono. That ritual can't be cancelled. It is an olden ritual that uses the root of life and has been continuously improved by the demon race; a prided ritual of the demons. It cannot be compared, but its fine details are way higher than the one Raidou-dono has of a ruling pact. The release of it will definitely vanish the soul of the target. It is a practice that one would hesitate to use even on the worst criminals." (Zef) "No, even if it can't be cancelled, we can just leave it as if it is an order of mine." (Makoto) "It is impossible to have a Demon Lord child that would definitely betray us with a single word of Raidou-dono. It is regretful, but this one wouldn't be able to leave her with any government related affairs." (Zef) "Gugh..." (Makoto)

Even so, it is just unreasonable to take back a demon maid-san, right?

It might be okay at the bases of the borders, but it would be hard for Rotsgard and Tsige.

Tsige might be a choice, but even if Rembrandt-san himself says OK, the whole town won't be ok with it.

Even if I am given someone that I can't place in the Company, it is honestly only going to trouble me.

Even if you tell me that it is already settled...

"As I thought, let's have her die. That is the best choice for us, the demon race, and for herself-desu wa. She will be able to die with peace of mind if we just pray for her to not do such rash things in her next life,

probably.” (Mio) “...Is that the wish of Goshujin-sama?” (Sari)

“Waka-sama, please tell her. That she is an hindrance.” (Mio)

Sari received that proposal of Mio, and Mio throws it to me.

What a crazy thing she is making me do.

What should I do?

Should I aim for the cancellation of the ritual?

With that as a preamble, I can take her in temporarily...

“...Shiki, is it possible to cancel this ritual?” (Makoto)

“I don’t know if that will be able to solve the problem though. But it should be possible to cancel it, if we just take the time to do it. Leaving aside the procedure and methods, it is a troublesome ritual. She probably won’t die, but I think it will take around ten years to analyse it.” (Shiki) Long.

“As long as they don’t know what we have been doing in that time, it is impossible to have Sari return to the demon race. At that time, if necessary, the Demon Lord would provide her shelter and a retired life though.” (Shiki) Don’t continuously release an aura of understanding.

So at the end, Zef has left me this ‘present’ huh.

“If Goshujin-sama tells me to die, I will end it here.” (Sari)

Ah, it is pissing me off.

All this talk has been about dying and dying.

They really say it so easily.

It is true that people do die easily, but to lightly throw away your life because of a promise feels wrong for me.

“Death is not a word that should be said so lightly, Sari-dono.” (Makoto)

“But I am already the possession of Goshujin-sama. If I am told to suffer, I will suffer; if I am told to die, I will die. It is the fitting end for me who was unable to keep my promise.” (Sari) “Was your life light enough to be

thrown away with a single promise?” (Makoto)

“For me, it wasn’t a promise that could be taken lightly.” (Sari)

“In that case, I don’t need that kind of person. I want the people that live together with me to have a long life after all.” (Makoto) “...Understood.” (Sari)

“?!”

Sari quickly took out a dagger and thrust it to her own neck.

Hey!

I didn’t tell her to die!

“Sari-dono?!” (Makoto)

There was no answer.

Well, that’s obvious, but...more importantly, it is strange.

Zef, the Demon Generals; no one is moving.

“Shiki, can you save her?!” (Makoto)

“Are you going to save her? A person that you called unnecessary?” (Shiki)

“Hey now, I said I didn’t need her, but I didn’t tell her to die! In the first place, this girl is an important existence for the demon race—” (Makoto) “If she is important, we don’t need to move ourselves; they should be the ones acting. In other words, Sari-dono has already completely lost her position within the demon race. If you don’t intend to take her in, just like what Mio-dono said, it would be best to have her die. A harsh lifestyle would be waiting for her if she doesn’t do so after all.” (Shiki) I look at Zef.

No, I glare at him.

She is a girl that has been raised as his own child you know?

Is he going to abandon her so easily?!

“Raidou-dono, this one understands what you are trying to say. But Sari

was the one who took a hair of Raidou-dono and did the ritual without consulting with anyone. And for the demon race, this ritual is the worst stigma. We are unable to save Sari. In this occasion, this one's personal feelings are pointless in the face of the demon race's will." (Zef) None of the demons move.

That's how much meaning this ritual holds for them.

Lucia was biting her lips, but she wasn't moving.

In exchange, she is glaring at me.

Damn it, you are in no position to be glaring at me, you know?

The one who did the ritual at her own convenience was Sari!

Mio and Shiki were also silently watching.

What should I do?

Should I let her die like this?

I am not that acquainted with Sari.

I do think that her childishness is lacking, but it is not like I want to teach her how to be childish.

The most I thought was that she is quite the mature demon.

In that case, if she will only be a pain, abandoning her...

"Raidou-dono, leaving aside that slave, there's something this one forgot to tell you. Is it okay?" (Zef) Zef passes beside Sari and approaches me.

That amount of blood. It is almost to the point of no return.

What is Zef trying to do at this moment?

"But your Majesty, right now is a bit..." (Makoto)

"It is okay. It is only going to take a bit." (Zef)

Zef takes the indecisive me to a slightly separated location.

A place where we can see the crowd, Sari, Mio, and Shiki.

(To tell you the truth, Raidou-dono...) (Zef)

Taking distance like this, Zef used thought transmission to talk with me.

(Sari is the only one who has actual blood relation to me within the Demon Lord children.) (Zef) And...now I know that they are blood related.

He was her blood father, and has been treated as a father all this time; and yet, Zef is taking that attitude towards Sari huh.

Is he intending to push through his position as a Lord?

(She is a child that was born from a temporary mistress, and it is something that the person herself doesn't know. It is publicly known that this one isn't married, and doesn't have his own child after all.) (Zef) (Do you intend to let your own child die?) (Makoto)

(This one said this a while ago, but since she has branded herself with the worst slave stigma, there's no method to cover for her. Even if she were not my own child, as long as she is a Demon Lord child, this one would provide the best of protections. But this is a matter that surpasses this.) (Zef) (Then what was the point of telling me that she is your own child?!) (Makoto)

(...This one wants you to take her in. This one won't ask you to marry her. She has that stigma after all. This one just wants you to have her serve at your side. This one doesn't mind how harsh of a job you give her. That's her wish after all. Just once, it may be way too late, but this one wants to grant her wish, as a father.) (Zef) (Even if it is such a wish? Your Majesty, that's too sly! That's sly, isn't it?!!) (Makoto) (Of course, this one is aware. This one is aware that no matter how much you scorn me, it can't be helped. This one can't stop being a Lord. That's why this one is asking you in such a makeshift manner. That's all this one had to say. Sorry for taking your time.) (Zef) When he lets go of my body, Zef returned to his previous location.

He didn't even give a glance to where Sari was.

Damn it.

Damn it!!

I...

.....

...

“Sari, you will probably regret it. The fact that you rashly pushed that stigma.”

“No, I will never regret it in my whole life. As long as Goshujin-sama doesn’t order it.” (Sari) “...Please stop that way of talking. It is okay to speak in a way you are most comfortable with.” (Makoto) “...Understood. I will do that, Goshujin-sama.” (Sari)

We have stopped within the blizzard.

The eyes of the demon race can’t reach us already.

As long as she isn’t dead, Shiki is able to interfere with magic, so it is a relief.

That’s why we are stopping in such a place.

“Waka-sama is way too kind-desu wa. She is not a dog or a cat, so it will be troublesome to go around picking them up so nonchalantly. This kind of girl can’t even serve as an object.” (Mio) “I did have a suspicion that you would take her in, but what will you be doing? It will be hard to have a demon as a clerk after all.” (Shiki) I did think.

I did think and think, and in the end, my decision at that moment was to save her.

There was plenty chance to abandon her.

In truth, I was terribly troubled.

I don’t think this will be comfortable for Sari who has been doing her best as a demon race member till now.

That’s why I think that she will be leading a harsh life from now on.

I will have her prepare herself for that.

She is actually able to choose death with my words, so I won’t let her complain.

“If Rotsgard and Tsige are no good, then there’s only one other place

left.” (Makoto) “Ah, Kaleneon huh. In that place, even if it’s a demon... well, we will have her do her best as demon citizen number 1.” (Shiki) Shiki thought it was Kaleneon and assents.

That wasn’t it.

It is clear that Kaleneon would come to mind, and there was also Zef’s conversation about having demons live there as well, but I was thinking of having a relative amount of demons live there at once, so having Sari as the number one citizen is no good.

For the sake of the future, I don’t think that’s possible.

“No, I will be bringing her to Asora.” (Makoto)

“!”

“I have decided that.” (Makoto)

“Waka-sama, even in that place, she will be all alone, you know? There’s no other demon after all.” (Mio) “Moreover, it is a classified location of the Kuzunoha Company. Until we have investigated if there’s any sort of modification done to the ritual, I think that it would be best to avoid that.” (Shiki) “It is fine. I won’t be letting Sari out of there for the rest of her life. That’s why, no matter what she does or what she learns, there will be no point. It will be like living her whole life working in a prison that she will not be able to escape.” (Makoto) “No matter where Goshujin-sama takes me, I will not object.” (Sari)

“Yeah, I know. I will be taking you there now. To the eternal prison that will be your last destination.” (Makoto) If she can, at the very least, forget about her position in the demon race and find something else to strive for, my guilt should lessen a bit.

Unable to abandon her, and yet, can’t take her directly.

I do think that it is a half-assed decision.

It is because of the ritual’s reaction that I was able to decide this.

That’s my only haven but...I am still naive huh.

Honestly, when I created the arms, I delved way too deep and felt

strange. That's probably why I wanted to obey this feeling of pity towards Sari.

It's been awhile since I have returned to Asora, and with a new resident at that.

What a heavy feeling this is.

At this rate, I might need a change of mood.

My magic power hasn't completely recovered yet, so let's partake on relaxation for a while.



Ah, I have done it now.

This may be the worst.

I am looking at a dream.

It is that dream.

I was quite tired, so I should have rested at Rotsgard instead of Asora.

What a blunder.

In this pitch black space, I instinctively knew it was that strange dream. The dream that not even Tomoe is able to investigate. I have realized that I am looking at it.

I still don't see anything, but I think that there's a me that's not me again.

...Hah...

(Hate...)

Hm?

(I hate it. I hate everything. The Goddess, this shitty world, and the people that live in that place as well. That woman that acts as a good person and utilizes as much as she can utilize; that idiotic brat that is creating a harem and trying to put his hands on the belongings of others. Everything makes me wanna puke!) Again, what an extreme way of

thinking we have here.

I can affirm the points of the world being cruel and about the Goddess, but the one playing as a saint...could it be Senpai?

The idiotic brat is definitely Tomoki.

Different from the patterns until now, my field of vision is totally zero, but I think this are my thoughts.

Did something happen for me to hate the two heroes this much?

The circumstances and the situation are in all honesty completely remote to me, so I can't even begin to imagine.

(...And yet...)

Eh?

Something is strange.

Or more like, something is welling up from within me.

This is a first.

(Why is it that no matter how much I kill, and kill, and kill, and kill, I don't feel anything? If I take revenge, if I have retaliated; there should be a sense of fulfillment. Why is it that no matter how many I kill, I don't feel any happiness?) Uuuh!!

Disgus...ting!

It feels as if someone has plunged its hand inside my stomach and stirring it up while being blindfolded, going round and round.

No good!

Still having this feeling to vomit, I open my mouth.

Nothing is coming out.

Well, this is a dream after all.

It might be because of that.

But my self that is in the bedroom must be...having the worst sensation.

I have declared my defeat and opened my mouth while having this nauseating feeling to vomit, and yet, it still wasn't letting me go.

It continues to provide me the same terrible sensation.

I can't take this.

This is truly hell.

Spare me please.

(Should I kill more? The Goddess and this world...and the trash that live in it. If I slaughter them all, will I be able to obtain slight happiness?) Stop it.

Your voice is making me feel even worse.

I wanted to restrain that vomiting sensation as much as possible, and wish for the monologue I am hearing to stop.

(I can't return anymore. There's no allies anymore. Everyone is an enemy. In that case, I have to bring death to the hostility. That way, the dangers will reduce. I will slaughter everyone. Children will become adults, and women will give birth to children. Before I am killed, I will...) Stoop it!!!

Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting
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Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting Disgusting
Disgusting Disgusting!

Anyone is fine!

This nausea, this dream...erase it please!!

"Sorry, boy. It seems like my gift has done a bit of evil."

"Ah, eh?"

There's a being that has heard the screams of my heart.

"It's not that long to be saying it's been awhile huh. We have met again, boy. Do you remember me?"

“Ah...Daikokuten-sama?” (Makoto)

“Umu, I am happy that you remember me. You have been seeing weird dreams for a while now, right?” (Daikokuten) “...Yes.” (Makoto)

“About how much do you remember of its contents?” (Daikokuten)

“All of them were of a different me speaking with someone else.”
(Makoto)

“...Fumu.” (Daikokuten)

“What are those? Are they my future? The kind that’s telling me what’s awaiting me ahead?” (Makoto) “Fufu, boy, that’s a sly way of asking. You have already guessed that that’s not the case.” (Daikokuten) “That’s...”
(Makoto)

“It is fine. It is no mistake that it was my blunder after all. Just like what you think, this is a self of yours that has advanced a different path from you.” (Daikokuten) “In other words, this is a story of me in a world that’s not my current one?” (Makoto) “...It is and it is not. Well, even if I explain it to you in detail, you wouldn’t be able to understand. Don’t worry, having that much understanding is not something you have to mind. Boy, it is fine to just continue living as you have without minding it.” (Daikokuten)
Saying that, Daikokuten-sama was standing right in front of me without changing his gentle expression.

That darkness, the nausea that I couldn’t escape from, and the dull headache; all of it has disappeared.

Of course, that voice as well.

Even if I can’t see the morning sun, a very dim light like that of the early morning was beginning to envelop the area.

That’s why I can’t see Daikokuten-sama’s figure well.

I can only see his expression and a bit of his ornamental articles, and all else, I could only see them faintly.

My face must be a mess with tears and snot, so being brighter is actually a bit embarrassing.

My thoughts had recovered to the point that I was able to think that way.

“But what was that nausea just now?” (Makoto)

“This time it must have linked with an existence quite close to you, boy. That must be why you didn’t ‘see’ but ‘feel’. That person’s feelings.”

(Daikokuten) “Those were...feelings?” (Makoto)

It wasn’t something as simple as that you know?!

“...People will gather a variety of experiences, and will live their life while carrying a variety of emotions. That person, at that scene, had his emotions at its peak while thinking that he doesn’t feel anything.

Confusion, despair, anger, sorrow; a lot of emotions were settled and were whirling. If you boy who doesn’t share any of the experiences he had, suddenly enters here and tastes them, there’s no way you would be able to process them. That was the identity of your unpleasantness.”

(Daikokuten) “Don’t worry. The chance to fall in that kind of situation is quite low.” (Daikokuten) Daikokuten-sama showed me a relieving smile.

A confirmation from a God huh, I am grateful.

But...

“Thanks.” (Makoto)

“Even if you say that, you are not convincing, boy. It isn’t good to speak too much about other worlds, but as a form of apology, I will tell you a bit. Listen well, you are the only one, boy. The only Misumi Makoto that was able to accomplish Creation. In other words, at that moment, at the instant you created those arms, it is safe to say that you have begun walking a different path from all the Misumi Makotos. There’s no problem in forgetting the dreams you have had until now. Actually, it is a waste to use them as reference and be dragged into them, you know?”

(Daikokuten) Creation?

Ah, those silver arms huh.

The ones that Shiki brought back to Asora.

It's been awhile since I have seen Tomoe that excited.

But I only gave substance to the magic power, and I feel like it is different from Creation.

"Creation? No, I think that wasn't Creation, but something more forceful though?" (Makoto) "There's no forceful or flexible in Creation. Using magic power, you create something that doesn't exist from zero. That's, in other words, Creation. Boy, you may be thinking that Creation is an impressive thing like giving birth to a world, but 'increasing' the amount of rocks in this world is enough to be called Creation, you know?" (Daikokuten) I feel like that's pretty impressive.

Because even Tsukuyomi-sama said that the power of Creation is something special.

I thought that what I did was to change the substance of magic power though.

"Uhm, in that case, haven't I done something outrageous?" (Makoto)

"Yeah, you did. A power that a limited amount of Gods are able to use, you have accomplished it with the body of a mortal after all. If the Goddess and us didn't have collars restraining us, we would have already flown to your place in an instant and begun war." (Daikokuten) Ah, can't laugh at that.

That was incredibly dangerous.

"That's because one of the reasons that brought this was our order of having you practice with your bow and increasing your magic power after all. To think that you would actually leave it to raw power...no well, I am truly impressed. It's been awhile since my blood has boiled." (Daikokuten) ...I think that having Daikokuten-sama's blood boil is dangerous.

Incredibly dangerous.

"Well, it is a good inclination. Makoto, hear me out. You can't let your principles grow and perform a royal road. You also can't let your emotions grow and advance a path of military rule. Slowly, it is fine to do it slowly, so think about the future, and decide in a way that you think is good. You

probably have already noticed yourself, but you are carrying a troublesome thing that would normally make you unable to open your eyes anymore. Without being engulfed by it, slowly advance as a mortal, okay? Don't just run away from destruction. In that point, your decision regarding that demon girl was good. As a Lord, that decision would have been bad, but as a human being, it wasn't bad." (Daikokuten) "...I will think properly before acting. Sorry." (Makoto)

"Oh, that wasn't a sermon, sorry. It is a problem that I fostered myself after all. A dragon, a spider, and a corpse huh. You have truly gotten yourself interesting servants, and the next one..." (Daikokuten) "Next one?" (Makoto)

"Ah...Kuku, oops. No good. When I am talking to you boy, my mouth loosens up. Anyways, I will make it so you don't see those kind of dreams again. Wake up once, and wash your face before going to rest again. It will get busy in the morning." (Daikokuten) "Morning?" (Makoto)

"Fuh, I will stop talking. Well then boy...in time, I would like you to use those silver arms to receive the attack of my Pinaka. I am looking forward to meeting you again in flesh." (Daikokuten) <The bow of God Shiva. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shiva_Dhanush> Without leaving a trace, Daikokuten-sama's figure disappears.

And then, I lift up my upper half from the bed.

I didn't...vomit, great.

I blink a few times, and after that, I went to wash my face.

The time is still around 00:00 o'clock.

There were a lot of ominous things, but the one who stopped that nightmare was the same Daikokuten-sama.

I don't know what reason he had to come here.

Could it be...it was only for my sake?

No, I don't think a God would do that.

...In the first place, there's no way I can understand the true reasons of a

God huh.

Let's go to sleep.

God did tell me to.

Yeah, let's sleep.

Chapter 193: Gift from a God

“Good morning.”

As soon as I woke up, I did my daily bow shooting and return to the mansion. At the entrance, there was Tomoe and Shiki.

Maybe because of the after-effects of depleting a high amount of magic power, my head was a bit heavy.

When I was pulling my bow, I felt refreshed, but when I finished, that sluggish sensation returned.

While I was greeting the two, my head went round and round and there was no change.

“Good morning, Waka. It looks like your complexion is still not that good but...could it be that for Waka, pulling the bow works as a medicine?” (Tomoe) “Good morning, Waka-sama.” (Shiki)

“Instead of calling it medicine, it is more like a part of me. I was told that it was okay to not hold back after all.” (Makoto) I look at the bow in my hands and a wry smile appears in both of their faces.

“The classes are tomorrow, is what I have heard but, are you heading somewhere today?” (Shiki) “...No, I still haven’t decided yet. I have something to take care of in Rotsgard, so I was thinking about showing my face in the store, but...I think that’s all I have in my plans.” (Makoto) “Then can you accompany me for a bit? There seems to be a small change in Asora you see.” (Tomoe) “...In that case, I will change quickly. Mio is already there?” (Makoto) I ask Tomoe as we walk the corridor.

“No, she has unexpectedly woken up early you see. She said that she will be checking the bowl and has gone to the Eldwas’ furnace.” (Tomoe) “Bowl...ah, the cooking one. Ceramics have already been completely incorporated in Asora huh. I thought it would end up as a hobby for only a part of them, that’s unexpected.” (Makoto) I had the Eldwas make a furnace and have them practice ceramic.

Of course, it was the proposal of Tomoe.

It is quite a while back, but the pottery that was created from the ceramic was liked by the people of Asora.

Interestingly, the Highland Orcs, Mist Lizards, Arkes, Gorgons, and the Winged-kins; in all the races, there were people that showed interest in it.

In Asora where metallic and wooden tools prevailed even in tableware, lately, it has been ceramics in all.

It has become natural to make the tablewares that one will be using on their own.

I returned to my room and finished changing, and once again follow the two.

Breakfast will be for later.

If something has happened in Asora, I have to know swiftly.

“Ceramics serve as greetings from the Company, in negotiations, and even for souvenirs. It is truly convenient. Seeing that there’s currently no products similar to others, it seems like everyone is adhering to reproducing it by magic. It is a grateful thing for us that it is showing worth, but, although it is true that they are not teaching the manufacturing methods, they are not trying to hide it at all. How idiotic.” (Shiki) When we grouped up again, the conversation was still about ceramic.

Shiki was prioritizing the ‘worth’ of ceramic.

Maybe that’s why he has begun giving them away in negotiations and important customers as gifts.

Lately, this has also been known around as a defining product of the Kuzunoha Company.

...There’s also talk that it is being sold at high prices in the black market.

I think that it won’t be long for Limia and Gritonia to begin making them as well though.

Also, Lorel has the knowledge of our world as well, moreover, there’s already people putting it into practice, so there should be no reason to be

getting this much attention.

Yeah.

Just like how Shiki said, we are not making obvious the manufacturing method, but we are not hiding it either.

That's why I thought it was strange that it hasn't been copied till now.

Even in the store, the Eldwas, Forest Ogres, and Shiki himself were distributing the bowls they made to the customers.

It is limited to a number of important customers is what I told them, and the others, I left it to their own discretion.

By the way, in terms of how well they are made, I think that the ones the Eldwas make are number one, but for some reason, the ones that Akua, Eris and Shiki worked on, have more popularity.

Maybe that's why the Eldwas had their competitive spirit lit on and increased their own skills, and it seems a portion of the dilettantes assessed them highly.

"Well, in given time, it will circulate to the Empire and the Kingdom, won't it? There's the hero there and all." (Makoto) "Right. Well, it is already pretty well-known that it is our style anyways. It won't really bother us." (Shiki) "Right. Then Tomoe, what was that about a change?" (Makoto)

"Yes, according to the Winged-kin...it seems like at the northeast, a giant lake can be seen." (Tomoe) "Lake?" (Makoto)

Does that mean the terrain has increased?

But I don't have more followers.

It is way too short of a time for a lake to have formed naturally, but if it is Asora...it might be possible?

Ah, they did say it was giant, so even in Asora, that wouldn't happen.

"Yes, they said that it was the first time they have seen a size like this, and that they can't see the end of it. Everything is water, and that new

scent was carried by the wind, they said. We won't know until we actually see it ourselves though." (Tomoe) "So big you can't see the end of it, and a new scent? Could that possible be..." (Makoto) "Yes, I also thought of the probability. And so, I was bringing Shiki to check it out and met with Waka." (Tomoe) "Lately, I have been going with Mio-dono to the port city when there's time, so I am already used to seeing the sea." (Shiki) Shiki speaks about a port city.

As expected, the two thought the same as I.

"Sea huh." (Makoto)

"It can be taken that way. And in reality, when I asked the Winged-kin if it was the sea, they asked me what was that." (Tomoe) "But if it's the sea, Waka-sama hasn't gotten a new follower, and I don't think Asora has expanded for no reason. It might be some sort of sign." (Shiki) That's true.

Until now, Asora has been increasing its size depending on my increase in magic power.

But it hasn't made any big changes in topography.

Those kind of cases occur when a new follower like Mio and Tomoe get added to the team.

The biggest change lately would be...the addition of Sari.

She is the first demon element here, but she doesn't have much power, so I don't think this place would change much just because she was added.

Demi-humans, Mamonos, and humans who have more power than her have entered, and it hasn't shown much change, so the chances are low.

"Anyways, I want to confirm it quick. Tomoe, you know where it is, right?" (Makoto) "Of course. Just in case, I have told everyone not to get close to it." (Tomoe) "Then, let's go. Can we teleport there?" (Makoto)

"Yes." (Tomoe)

Tomoe quickly creates a Mist Gate.

I don't think it will be dangerous, but it is the first time something like this has occurred.

With a bit of cautiousness, I enter the mist, and then...

A pure white sandy beach, and waves of water, water, water...a whole space of water and the horizon that can be seen afar.

A splendid beach like the ones that can be seen in the southern touring catalogues.

“...”

I was speechless.

This is the sea.

It is a type that I have not seen in real life, but I was sure that it was the sea.

I have actual proof that poisons practically don't work on me, so without much cautiousness, I went to the beach and gave a lick to the water.

Yeah, it is salty.

Salt water.

Tomoe and Shiki did the same and nod.

“This is definitely the sea.”

“It is the sea, it is strangely peaceful though.”

“No doubt about it.”

Shiki, who has done a variety of tasks in the port city, seems to be excited.

I use [Sakai] to search for our current location and the end of the sea.

There's a number of islands, and there's also a wall of mist quite far.

Just that it is not visible from here, so it must be really far.

From the Mirage Town to here...I wonder, maybe with a carriage it will take quite a bit to get here.

It might take one to two hours if they hurry, but it would be necessary to have transportation.

Ah, I spontaneously thought of the carriage with luggage accounted as well.

If it's just people in it, it should be a bit faster.

Especially the Winged-kin, I think they would arrive here pretty fast.

But to make it realistically possible to come and go regularly, there would be a need for a method to teleport huh.

Specially in Asora where there's no enemy, there's not much worry about setting a teleport formation.

"Now that I think about it, at our back...?!"

I am at the very center of the sandy beach. Maybe because of my surprise in the sea, I didn't check out the scale of the beach.

Thinking about that, I look at my back.

There, the sandy beach continued for a while, and then, it turns into land.

This is something that I somewhat understood with Sakai though. But looking at it with my own eyes makes my body stiffen.

At the other side of the white sand that continues on for a while, there's dry land.

In the land, there's sparse amounts of grass growing, and trees here and there.

It could be said that at the other side of the super high quality beach, it was a bit dry.

But that's not the part I was surprised about.

It was the fact that there was something there that Sakai didn't detect at all.

That's one of the reasons.

The other reason, are the trees.

A tree I have only seen once in TV, but has an unforgettable form.

“Hm, it seems like there’s something there. A sign? In Asora?” (Tomoe)
It seems like Tomoe has also noticed it.

It is not surprising that she hasn’t given attention to the trees.

I approach the sign that Tomoe pointed out and my Sakai didn’t react to.

I activate my Magic Armor, and use Sakai in enhancement as I approach.

I was quite on guard.

Approaching it, and arriving at the sign from a distance where I can read its contents...

“...Hah?” (Makoto)

I unconsciously let out a stupefied voice.

Tomoe and Shiki also run to where I was.

Each time they kick the sand, it makes a kyukyu sound and it makes it less dramatic.

When I finish reading it till the end, the sign shines brightly and flew up.

Yeah, like a touch and go.

...Hah...

‘You have really increased your magic power, Makoto. This is a gift from me. I had my brother help a bit, but it is frankly, the sea! By the way, this is a relay gift, and the gift from Daikoku-jisan<oldman> will be coming a bit later. Do your best from now on as well. Also, after you finish reading this sign, it will become fireworks. There’s no reason for it.

-By Susanoo.”

And so, that’s what was written.

And here I was wondering what was going on.

Now that he mentions it, when those Gods came, they did say something about gifts.

...It seems that because of Daikokuten-sama’s gift, I ended up seeing

those weird dreams, so at this rate, I feel like I will be played around for 1 more round.

I don't know what it will be, but I think that once I increase my magic power more and make Asora bigger, I will know.

Sea.

The sea huh.

What an incredible surprise.

It seems like there are rich people that get things like islands and castles, but receiving a sea is kinda...rare, I think.

A Don sound that let us know of the firework resounded in the sky.

“Waka, what’s going on?” (Tomoe)

“Are you hurt anywhere?” (Shiki)

“I am fine. It is from a God, he says that he will be giving me a sea.”
(Makoto) “...”

“...”

“It seems like in this matter of the sea, we are free to use it in whichever way we like.” (Makoto) “So a sea is something that can be given.” (Tomoe)

“Even if it’s Asora, that’s way too absurd.” (Shiki)

Shiki’s voice was a bit cracked.

I feel like the words of Shiki about being absurd include me as well.

Please spare me from that.

I also understand how you feel.

“The sign didn’t mention it, but with that tree here, I wonder if Athena-sama was involved in this as well.” (Makoto) “Tree? The tree that is here and there? It is certainly true that it has an interesting shape. As I thought, it really is something from your world, Waka?” (Tomoe) “Yeah. This is my first time seeing this personally though. It has that form, after all. I don’t think there’s a way I would mistake it.” (Makoto) “Is it a tree that’s related

to a God? In other words, a type of sacred tree? Now that you mention it, I have heard from Tomoe-dono that there are Shrines in your world that are made in places with these kind of sacred trees.” (Shiki) Shiki makes a wrong guess about my words and is deeply misunderstanding.

“No, sacred trees are mostly trees that have history in it and are seen to have long longevity-ja ga.” (Tomoe) Tomoe seems to have begun holding a dispute with Shiki.

Well, there’s no need to do something like that. Tomoe’s explanation is correct after all.

“Shiki, I didn’t say it with that meaning. I brought out the name of that God because that tree originally grows in places close to where people who hold believe towards that God are.” (Makoto) I think that this was part of a homework I had.

“From its shape, it looks like a mushroom.” (Shiki)

Right.

It has a look like that of a mushroom or a broccoli.

From a set distance of the trunk, a large amount of branches spread, and at the top side of it, it is filled in green.

The trunk stretching straight up makes it look like a mushroom, but midway, it ramifies and that makes it look like broccoli.

Its name has impact, and after looking at its strange look from videos, I was able to clearly remember it.

I really wanted to one day see it for myself, but to think that it would be fulfilled in this way.

“It is called the Socotra Dragon Tree, and it is written as Dragon Blood Tree.” (Makoto) <竜血> dragon-blood

“...Quite the dangerous name it has.” (Tomoe)

Tomoe had a slightly bitter face.

“In my world, dragons didn’t exist, so I think dragons had no real

relation to it. If I remember correctly, the sap that comes out from the trunk is deep red, and it serves as medicine. And they called it dragon blood or something like that, so it moved by word of mouth and was called the Dragon Blood Tree...or so I think” (Makoto) There’s Gods, so maybe Dragons actually did exist, but well, in my common sense, they didn’t, so...

If a dragon was actually involved in that tree, it would be interesting, but that’s of no importance right now.

There’s no way to confirm it after all.

“A red sap that can be used as medicine. That’s interesting.” (Shiki)
Shiki looks at the Dragon Blood Tree with different eyes.

“Yeah, it is not only used as ointment, it seems like it has a trait of hardening in rain, so it seems like it was used as a pill as well.” (Makoto)
“...Do you mind if I investigate it?” (Shiki)

“It’s fine. It’s related with the flora, so call the Arkes and Forest Onis as well, okay?” (Makoto) “Yes!” (Shiki)

“Waka, in my part, I want to investigate the sea itself. Do you mind if I use Mio for that?” (Tomoe) “Okay.” (Makoto)

“...Just that, Mio and I aren’t specialized in the sea, so if possible, it would be a great help if we had someone that knew of the sea and what’s in it.” (Tomoe) “True. Is there someone like that?” (Makoto)

“None. How about it, Waka? Asora has increased in size quite a bit, so how about doing a resident selection again?” (Tomoe) “New residents huh. Looking at the Gorgons and the Winged-kin, if it’s the people that you guys select, it won’t be a problem, maybe.” (Makoto) “Of course, I will have Waka do a final interview.” (Tomoe)

Uh, she got me.

Even though I haven’t proposed anything, she already got me.

Hm?

Ah!

“Hm, I will do that, but hey Tomoe, weren’t there people that weren’t

able to pass in the end? The small ones.” (Makoto) “Small...ah, there were. I heard they made Ema angry. I don’t remember if they were fairies or spirits or whatever” (Tomoe) “Yeah, those guys...eh? What was their name?” (Makoto)

Ah...ehm...

“Antonio?” (Makoto)

“If I remember correctly, they did have that kind of name. It was A-something.” (Tomoe) “What happened to them? We want people related to water right now but, can you investigate that just in case?” (Makoto) “... Waka-sama, Tomoe-dono; they are called Al-Efemera. A peculiar fairy race that controls a part of the Spirits.” (Shiki) Shiki entered the conversation that was proceeding between Tomoe and I.

Oh, right.

They did have that kind of name!

The only thing I could remember was how feisty they were.

“Oh, Al-Efemera huh. I could only remember that they were a spunky bunch.” (Tomoe) So Tomoe was almost the same huh.

Who was the one that was responsible for them?

As I thought, I can’t remember the details.

“Thanks, Shiki. Al-Efemera, right. Then Tomoe, begin the selection, okay?” (Makoto) “...No well, there’s already a flood of people wishing for migration, you know? Even if I call it selection, it is more like, finally opening one door for a massive line. Well, it is something like that, so it won’t take that much time. What we will be doing is having a few interviews, and investigate the particulars of that race, so...it won’t be long before Waka interviews them.” (Tomoe) “...A flood, I see. Well, I count on you for the investigation of the numbers in the race and its scale.” (Makoto) Tomoe and Shiki had begun doing thought transmission.

As for me, I was looking at the sea.

The more I looked at it, the more this beach instilled my desire to take

off my clothes and jump into it.

I feel like I can expect quite a bit when the starry sky and the moon come out.

With this scale, there shouldn't be any complains in having it as a private beach for a bit of time, right?

My expectations are growing.

Anyways, new residents, and a subject that Shiki is interested in researching huh.

Counting the business in the demon race territory, there are a lot of things to do now.

When I go to Rotsgard, there will probably be talk about me going to Lorel, so the other party will most likely want it to happen soon.

It is known that I went to the Empire, so even if I don't refuse them, I wonder when I will actually be able to go.

Mio and Senpai didn't have a good atmosphere between them, so if possible, I should leave Mio. I want to go in a time when Senpai is not there and return though.

Regarding this, I should confirm the plans.

Thinking of resting today and working tomorrow might have been a bit of wishful thinking from me.

Looking at the waves that were peacefully overlapping in the sea, matters appear one after another, and yet, I make a bitter smile.

Yeah, let's begin moving starting today.

The only business I had in Rotsgard was to look at the weakened Root that Tomoe told me about, but that idiot, he literally used all his strength in that blaze, and because of the recoil, he is bedridden, or so I heard.

He is really an idiot to the core.

About visiting Root...I will do some extra tasks while I'm there.

And so, from today on, I will be working.

Chapter 194: Arrival at Academy Town where his students await

From the other side of the door, a voice saying: 'Come in', sounded.

The woman that guided me here confirmed this, and after bowing, she leaves.

Compared to before, she is a bit dry.

That Root is down on bed, so it should be easier to work though.

Now that I think about it, Rembrandt-san and Morris-san would open the door just like that and invite me in, and then, they would enter themselves as well, but it seems here is different.

"I was told that he would be in his office, so I thought that it wouldn't be that impressive, but as always, you go one step above my expectations." (Makoto) In the past there was no bed in the office, and yet, there's one now.

The position of the sofa has changed as well.

He probably intended to have the people that visit him use that.

...Well, if it's this excessively spacious office, using it as a sickroom is not impossible.

The security seems to be decent, so one would be able to relax.

After a moment of being lost for words, I called out the owner of this room, in other words, Root.

At Root who is at the bed that's temporarily there, and who is already in a costume like that of a wounded person.

"Thanks for visiting, Raidou-dono. As the Head of the Adventurer Guild, I am sorry for showing you this pathetic shape of mine." (Root) What kind of laudable things are you saying this late in the game?

In the first place, what's this about being wounded?

Root's whole body is covered in bandages. And his left foot is plastered

like how they classically do when one has a bone fracture; lifted up and hanged.

It is true that he looks like a picturesque wounded person.

It even looks grave.

But from what I have heard, the reason why he is down is because of the after-effects of using blaze, in other words, exhaustion.

“Doing something stupid in a divine form, and when you return, you do a cosplay of an injured person? You must be betting your life in this joke.” (Makoto) “How rude to call it cosplay. These are all real wounds, Raidou-dono.” (Root) “I heard that it was exhaustion and that it will take one week for full recovery though.” (Makoto) “...Raidou-dono, that information is old. A while ago it would have been true though. From what I see now, it will take around 1 month to recover.” (Root) ...What’s that about ‘from what I see’?

Have a doctor look at it.

Now that I think about it, in this world, there’s no big hospital.

There are small places for medical examination, but I don’t see a place that has a good amount of beds and medical staff.

It will mostly be done with magic, and it is true that there are many medicines that show their effects in a really fast manner, but...a doctor huh.

Treating dragons would be a special case, so excluding that point, yeah... a veterinarian, or a demi-human doctor, it might be good to try raising one.

Well, even if I say that, the one who will do the actual raising will not be me, and the one who will be thinking about the curriculum and producing it will not be me either.

I will just be telling and leaving everything to others, so I can’t just carefreely tell them to try it and it is also unknown if it will actually give form.

Well, it would be good if it serves as some sort of impetus.

“Did you make a diagnosis by yourself?” (Makoto)

“Of course, Raidou-dono. Even if I look like this, I am confident that my medical skills are better than those of the doctors and priests around.”

(Root) For a while now he has been going ‘Raidou-dono, Raidou-dono’.

What he is saying is also normal, so maybe today he is scheming something.

It is a saving grace that I don’t have to hear the thoughts of a pervert, but this is eerie.

He always calls me Makoto-kun.

He calls me Raidou-dono only when he is acting as the Guild Master.

But right now we are inside the office, so there’s no need to do that.

“And? You are quite distant here. What are you scheming today, Ro-?”

(Makoto) “Raidou-dono!” (Root)

?

How unusual for him to cut off my words.

“It seems like you get along pretty well. There’s a lot of mysteries regarding him, but it seems like it has increased by one more. Well then Falz-dono, please rest properly and have your body recover. About the matter of the representative, I have understood the situation, so it is fine now.”

!!

“I am sorry for not being able to give you much hospitality and has ended up all being talk about work, representative Zara. In the meantime, I will be counting on you.” (Root) “Between us, visits are a pretext. Don’t mind it. I see, Falz-dono and him, both have a lot of secrets. Maybe that was the motive to how you get along? Then, maybe I should have secrets myself and see how it goes, hahaha.” (Zara) ...

“Please don’t joke.” (Root)

“The cooperation of you two was a big help in the recovery of Rotsgard. Being in good terms with each other is something to be happy about. I might have been a bit jealous. Now then, see you later.” (Zara) “Yeah, you as well, take care of yourself.” (Root)

W-Why is Zara-san here?

I should have activated Sakai.

In the first place, Root should tell me with thought transmission.

Ah, in this room you can't use thought transmission.

It seems to be the prided technology(self-proclaimed) of Root.

(Raidou, when you finish the visit, lend me your time. I will be waiting, not at the merchant guild, but at my store.) (Zara) As he passes beside me, he whispers.

Without hearing the answer, Zara-san leaves.

Ah, my next plan has been decided.

My plans were to eat, check my store, and then go to the Academy though.

It is bitter that all of those plans are postponable.

It is hard to refuse a person that has been taking care of me in this town.

“Root, aren't you cruel?” (Makoto)

“I thought I was doing a good enough follow-up for you to notice though.” (Root) After Zara-san left, I immediately voice out my complains.

“In the first place, if you have a visitor already, it is alright to just have me wait. From what I see, the conversation was over already after all.”

(Makoto) “Makoto-kun too; I thought that since you are standing in this stage, you maybe would be able to manage, and wanted to try it out.”

(Root) “Do tests in tests. Don't suddenly go for it in crucial moments.”

(Makoto) “If I remember correctly, in the olden days, Zara got very good at erasing his presence. But it isn't something that can't be sounded out.

Wouldn't it be good for Makoto-kun to be able to do something a high

ranked adventurer can? It seems like you have magic that specializes in searching, but do that without relying on it.” (Root) “Guh.” (Makoto)

“Also, just like what I said before, I am currently gravely wounded.” (Root) “I did hear. It will take 1 month to recover, right? Weren’t you only tired because of using blaze?” (Makoto) “...While I was down on bed, I had visitors you see. Two women with fiendish smiles.” (Root) “Women huh.” (Makoto)

There’s still brave people out there that can do this much to Root huh.

“Those women entered this room I was resting in, and in an instant, they flipped me out of bed, and while laughing malevolently, they assaulted me with punches and kicks.” (Root) Malevolently...scary.

We are talking about this pervert, so there’s no doubt he has bought the grudge of many.

But to invade when he is weakened and assault him while laughing...

Your daily actions are important.

Lately I haven’t taken care of my students, so maybe there’s a need to be slightly gentler with them.

Yeah.

“Karma, what a deep word, isn’t it?” (Makoto)

“...Words that have no trace of sympathy towards me. Even though one of them was the samurai otaku of your place though.” (Root) Hah?

“Even though I was so exhausted that I couldn’t make a single move, that samurai otaku and that middle-aged desert lizard woman brought blunt weapons and came to beat me up!” (Root) Tomoe, just when I was wondering that she was strangely kind when speaking of Root, it wasn’t because she was bribed, but because she had already been refreshed.

I remember the words of Tomoe a few days ago: ‘Even if he is like that, it is true that he has been taking care of us, so how about going to visit him at least once, Waka?’

When I look at this terrible spectacle and look back at what she said, the

meaning changes into having a loyal dog showing its hunting results to its master.

Leaving aside if she is actually a loyal dog type.

In that case, the other one is Sand Wave, Grount-san?

Regarding her, I was told that she doesn't leave the White Desert so I had to bring the egg to her.

If she can come to Rotsgard to beat up Root, shouldn't she be able to come get the egg?

...Or could it be that this pervert is that much troublesome even within the superior dragons?

"I see." (Makoto)

"In the first place, isn't the original reason for it because you brought out that possibility from the sacred treasure? Just what kind of luck you have, Makoto-kun?! And yet, that Tomoe said: 'You went all the way to a demon race city to stalk Waka? It seems like Waka has collapsed, what will you do about it?!' And Grount was Grount, the only thing she said was: 'Hohohoho!! That's scary!' (Root) "?!! That's wrong isn't it?! You are the main culprit for setting up a stupid attack that would make you drop for 1 week! In the first place, I wasn't the one who activated it, it was the demon race people! Do you know how much trouble I had to go through to stop that genocidal weapon by the name of blaze?!" (Makoto) "For some reason, I am absolutely sure that it wouldn't have happened if you weren't there! It troubled me as well you know?! I was in the middle of seducing my new secretary in a restaurant with good atmosphere, when I was forcefully summoned! Thanks to that, she thought I suddenly ran away from her, and because I have been bedridden, it is incredibly difficult to do a follow-up!!" (Root) "Like hell I care! Here I nullified all of those buckshots and the thick one that came after, and collapsed from that! Even so, one of the attacks fell to the far mountains, and things turned hectic. I later received a report that there were no casualties, so I was a bit relieved though! There were several tens of deaths at the city, so don't turn defiant!" (Makoto) "I set it up with power enough to cause a hole on the

level of a country after a—,wait, several tens?” (Root) There were probably more, but as far as I know!

“That’s right! Because of the roar that came before the blaze, several tens of deaths appeared, mainly within the children and old ones of the demon race! If we were to count the other injured ones, the digits would increase by two you know?! Reflect on what you have done, reflect on it!” (Makoto) “Eh, isn’t that place in cinders, or more like, didn’t it end up with a deep hole? I heard the place of Crimson Red was safe, but the demon race settlements that were around the area were wiped out, right?” (Root) “No way. I received it all and nullified it. The price was that I collapsed though. You made me feel the stifling sensation of having my magic power deplete, something that I would have preferred not tasting it ever. Why did I have to collapse from taking care of your own blunders? Remembering it, even now I...yeah, Tomoe did good! That’s how I feel!” (Makoto) “...Makoto-kun.” (Root)

“What’s up, suddenly going quiet.” (Makoto)

“How did you make it disappear?” (Root)

“I had Mio gather it, and then, I received it and extinguished it.” (Makoto) “With magic?” (Root)

The atmosphere of Root changed.

How to say it, it was as if a mass of curiosity was reflected in those eyes.

His eyes being blank was also kinda scary.

“By changing my Magic Armor, or something like that. I had Shiki provide support, so I actually don’t know the details well.” (Makoto) I felt like it would be better to not mention Creation, so I decide to play the fool.

I explain by mixing in some truth and make it hard to discover.

“A change to Materia Prima...That...can you do it now?” (Root)

“You really don’t listen to what others say. Didn’t I tell you that I had Shiki provide support? I can’t.” (Makoto) “...I see. You were able to, in essence, stop it by yourself without having casualties in the surroundings...

I see..." (Root) It seems like he has begun muttering by himself.

That's new.

Just that, in Root's case, the new facets I see of him are all disappointing.

"Heey, are you alive? While I was in this visit, I was thinking about receiving the candidates list of the adventurers that can go to Kaleneon; you can do it, right? Hellooo~" (Makoto) "...Makoto-kun, I am hurt."
(Root)

"If you are saying that, use the word wounded, or maybe, 'I have been wounded', would be more accurate? No wait, listen to what I am saying."

(Makoto) "That's not it. Those two wounded my body, but Makoto-kun has left my heart in shambles. That's why saying: 'I am hurt', is correct."

(Root) "...You know, I am sorry to say this but, that goes for both of us."

(Makoto) "That's why, please leave for today. If it's about the list, I have left it with the girl that guided you here, so you can just take it. I may be in this state, but I haven't cut corners, so don't worry." (Root) "Ah, I see."
(Makoto)

"That's right. A few moments ago, Zara called for you, right? Go there already." (Root) How cold.

That helps me a lot.

"Understood. Take care of yourself." (Makoto)

"I am waiting for you to creep in my bed at night." (Root)

"Yeah, I will tell Tomoe and Grount-san that message." (Makoto)

"..."

"Well then." (Makoto)

I have already gotten used to his sexual harassment.

Now then, let's go to Zara-san's store.

If I remember correctly, the brothel...I mean, the real estate store.

When he is speaking about 'my store', he means that place.

Publicly, Zara-san doesn't touch brothels.

I give a backward glance at Root, and head outside to receive the tube that has the list inside from the reception lady.



“Have you been doing outside work lately? Since that incident, your popularity has increased, and beginning with the major powers, the other countries are also calling for you, is how things are going?”

“...Just as you have surmised.” (Makoto)

Arriving at the store of Zara-san, I was acquainted enough with the reception and the employees to exchange greetings and be welcomed, and was allowed inside the room of the representative.

It seems like there's pretty few merchants brought into the room of Zara-san instead of his office, and the first time I was allowed to the room, there were eyes of surprise and doubt directed at me.

And so, Zara-san is in the middle of seeing through the outside work I have been doing recently.

“It seems like you have done a bad management in your visits to the places...is what I want to say, but there's no way you would be able to refuse Gritonia and Limia, so well, there are times when people have to taste busier times than others. This can't be helped.” (Zara) Oh?

I thought he would get angry at me, but he is being kind of nice.

Because of his looks, I feel around 50% more kindness.

“You are always absent in the Guild meetings, but the representative is properly coming out, so there should be no problem. I was surprised that the representative was not Shiki-san but a demi-human. After the incident, this town has lessened its discrimination towards demi-humans. There have been many survivors that were saved by demi-humans after all. I don't know how long this will last, but it seems like it still isn't that time.” (Zara) “That's a good inclination.” (Makoto)

“The Church doesn't seem to like this much, but the tops of this town's church are good willed. The current head at that place may not look like it,

but she is a good listener.” (Zara) The only thing I remember about her is that she has a nice voice, but it seems she is somewhat exemplar.

For people that are dispatched to other towns, it is a necessary ability.

“Your representatives are also doing their part, you know? Those girls... Akua and Eris, was it? Those girls have given a number of sharp opinions and interesting proposals. There are people that say it with a joking tone but with serious eyes that they would prefer to have them attend more instead of you.” (Zara) “...I would prefer if you were to just mention the joking part.” (Makoto) “Idiot, learn of the atmosphere. Every time, there’s someone that proposes those two to start a business, but they always immediately reject it. I don’t know why, but you were blessed with good subordinates. Treasure them, and make them useful for your own growth.” (Zara) “Yes, I will do my best.” (Makoto)

“Since the time Rembrandt told me of you, I have been watching you, but it seems like it is not that you are messing around, just that you haven’t caught up, that’s all. Despite this, your surrounding environment and the goods you have are so extraordinary, that you are steadily increasing your position. That’s close to terrifying.” (Zara) Totally true.

...Like seriously true.

I didn’t expect that Zara-san would be the one telling me this though.

“I am still inexperienced, and I’m lacking a lot.” (Makoto)

“Yeah, really. If we are to seriously raise you as a merchant, I think it would be best to cut you off your surroundings and have you work at a branch store of some random town. If it were me, I would do that. But in your case, you are a ‘fighting merchant’ after all, no, an ‘army merchant’ would be more fitting, maybe? It kinda feels lukewarm. ‘Annihilation Merchant’, ‘Landmine Merchant’...it somehow isn’t coming out well, but it is around those types. There’s no precedents.” (Zara) W-What cruel comparisons.

Moreover, the word merchant totally feels like an extra.

“Uhm, and so, what business did you have?” (Makoto)

Being teased more than this will make me sad, so I decide to hear what he has to say.

My stomach doesn't hurt from just meeting him anymore, but after this, I want to go to the Academy.

I want to finish the irregular business as soon as possible.

"Hm, yeah, I have two. The first one is regarding the cooperation for the future reconstruction. The other is about Ester." (Zara) Leaving aside the reconstruction, the place of Ester-san?

Something to do with the brothel?

In that case, it must be about 'those girls'.

I haven't been told about any problems.

I would be able to understand if Ester-san has opinions she would want to tell Zara-san but, I wonder what it is about?

"Cooperation for the reconstruction, is it." (Makoto)

"Yeah, currently, you are leaving the reconstruction to your employees and your students. It has been quite helpful. And about that, there's something I want to confirm but, can we continue the cooperation in this pace?" (Zara) "Of course. There's still areas that haven't been reconstructed, and the places where the last variants rampaged, are still in shambles. I heard that that place will be serviced as a park, so it should be the first to be constructed, right?" (Makoto) "That's a great help. Honestly, the cooperation of Kuzunoha Company is so crucial that it is influencing the pace of it. The two big trees that suddenly appeared have enough presence to become the symbol of Academy Town in the future. I can't increase the priority in construction, but I would want to work in that area." (Zara) If the variants are able to provide a restful place for the people of this town in the future, it isn't a bad place to die.

The park may not be high priority, but if we are able to maintain the speed of reconstruction, it is not a far off future.

"And so, was there some sort of problem in Ester-san's place? They are

girls that are inexperienced with the outside world, but I thought that they didn't cause any problems though." (Makoto) "...No problem has been caused. Raidou, you, where did you kidnap those girls from?" (Zara) "...Zara-san, that's not a funny joke. I just purely worked as an intermediary. I just tied the girls with a place to work in." (Makoto) There's no way I would be trafficking humans.

Kusunoha Company won't do business that I don't want to do.

I am already in depression because of the matter of that demon, Sari.

It seems like no matter what, trafficking slaves is not fit for me.

"Fuh, it is a joke. But I didn't think that you would bring women when I gave you that free pass to the brothels. And it seems you haven't 'used' it, not even once, Raidou. Ester was sad that you didn't come." (Zara) "Please spare me from that. I don't have the time to—" (Makoto)

"Time to embrace a woman is something that can be created even if busy. If you really wanted to embrace one, that is." (Zara) "In the first place, Ester-san is not a prostitute but the store manager, isn't she?" (Makoto) "Manager and prostitute. If she likes the customer, she will accompany them. She must have proclaimed herself as a prostitute when she spoke with you, right? Well, in truth, the amount of people that she likes can be counted with the fingers of a hand, so you can brag about it, you know." (Zara) "Brag about what. Then there's no real problem with those girls, right?" (Makoto) "In general, no. If I had to say one, it is that I was asked if I can increase the numbers more." (Zara) "Numbers?" (Makoto)

"You presented them as demi-humans, but in reality, we are able to put them out in the store as humans to the customers. It is quite popular. There are customers that have become addicted already." (Zara) If I called them mamono, they wouldn't accept them, so I told them they were demi-humans. And yet, at some point in time, they were beginning to treat them as humans huh.

It's not turning into a problem, so oh well.

"As a human? Well, there are no special traits that can be seen in their

outward appearance after all.” (Makoto) “That’s right. There are no few amount of idiots that only take humans within the customers, but if they don’t notice it, it doesn’t matter to us. If they don’t like it, they should notice it. In that case, we show them as humans in good faith.” (Zara) In those parts, I don’t have that way of thinking.

The kind of thinking that it is the customers’ fault for not noticing what the goods taken from the store are and fool them.

By the way, in this world, it is quite normal for customers to request connoisseurs, so people that have a standard of only using genuine articles like me, are in the minority.

“About the popularity, is there no envy from the other girls?” (Makoto) “In that aspect, Ester is properly holding the reins. And so, the reconstruction is going well, and the customers, the men from town, workers from outside, guardians of the students, and a variety of other people have been increasing. There’s been talk about creating a new community building. And, I was asked if there were other girls from their village that can come here. Ester-san has been pestering me about it.” (Zara) “I see.” (Makoto)

I think I heard something about the guardians of the students, but I ignore it.

“Just like you told me, I have not investigated the backgrounds of those girls. That’s why I am asking you in this way. How about it?” (Zara) “...If it’s a few, I think there will be some that will want to. In a near future, I will have someone from my company give you the details of my answer.” (Makoto) Actually, it is limited to the Gorgons that have been able to somewhat control their petrification ability though. I have been sending a few of them to the brothel of Rotsgard.

Regarding this matter, Zara-san is also referring to those girls.

It doesn’t seem like they have been causing any real problems, so it looks like it is going really well.

When I got the free pass, I thought it was a waste of a treasure, but I am happy that it was able to work as a plus for the Gorgons, Zara-san, and

me.

But the petrification control is a bottleneck, and it isn't something that all of them are able to do.

Right now, unless they are quite the strong Gorgons, they are unable to leave Asora.

From within them, half of them have been sent to the brothel, and half have been placed around the company and as clerks.

"I am counting on you." (Zara)

"Here as well, I am grateful to have them working." (Makoto)

"...I am truly relieved that it didn't come to having them die without me noticing and ending up in a dispute with you. They are able to suppress the violent customers as well after all. They are truly priceless treasures. Please tell them from my part that they can come work at my place anytime they want." (Zara) "Got it." (Makoto)

"Also, it seems like those girls are sleeping at your Kuzunoha Company but, are you okay with the rumors? If you want to, I can prepare a place for them to live in. If they have some sort of custom that makes it hard to live together, it doesn't have to be in the brothel, I can prepare a house for them if necessary." (Zara) "You are really rating them highly." (Makoto)

"I like people that are positive and talented at their own job after all." (Zara) "...I am positive, but I don't think I'm talented, so..."

Let's just honestly accept the acknowledgement he has given to the Gorgons.

They are also working diligently in the company as well, so I am grateful.

"I will tell them. If business here is done, I will be taking my leave now." (Makoto) "That's all I had to say. Just, this is something I am curious about, so I will ask. Raidou, do you intend to do something at the sea this time? From here to the sea, it is quite far, but you smell like salt, you know? Even if you are working outside, the sea was unexpected. In winter, the sea gets rough, so it doesn't serve as good business." (Zara) "Ah, this

is...” (Makoto)

“If it is related to your business, there’s no need to force yourself to tell me. I don’t think I will hear it. Actually, I want to scold you to keep it to yourself.” (Zara) “...Thanks for the lecture. It is related to a business that I might have in the future, so I will be keeping it to myself.” (Makoto) “Good. That sincerity of yours, hide it when doing business here. It is ideal, but the places where that can be used are few.” (Zara) “Yes, well then, I will be taking my leave.” (Makoto)

“Sorry for having you come all the way here. Be careful...well, it might not be necessary for you, but there’s unnecessary trouble littered anywhere. Tread smartly.” (Zara) How to say it, every time I meet with him, it always ends with a lecture.

As I thought, I am no good with him.

Ehm, add in my schedule: ‘how many of the Gorgons can currently go outside’.

When I return to Asora, I was planning on having the Winged-kin bring a few people related to the sea.

I was thinking of having the Gorgons tag along with that, but it seems like that won’t do now.

In the first place, I am having those girls do something close to stock-farming in Asora, so it is fine to leave it like that.

It is going well after all.

Now then, there will soon be new residents, so it is not a pressing matter.

It is close to noon, and in this time, the store gets quite busy, so it will be better if I don’t go.

The business I have left now would be, contacting Limia, and the Academy.

The contact from Limia will be sent to the store, so first is the Academy huh.

Right now it is lunch time, so it will be easy to find Jin and the others.

When they are in the middle of classes, I would have to leave messages, and it will increase the trouble.

I will have to do a follow-up since they have been working hard in the reconstruction.

It is proper to tell them that classes will be beginning for real.

About the applications for new students, it will probably go smoother if I first head to the office department.

Just that, it will be troublesome with the Academy Principal and the teacher faction.

While feeling my feet slightly heavy, I head out to the main street that has completely returned to its original state.

Now then, next will be the Academy.

Chapter 195: End of century Academy

There's liveliness.

Or more like, blood lust?

The Academy I have been long absent for, has a strange atmosphere.

The stone paved path that goes from the main gate to the first school building gives an atmosphere of rich people attending this Academy.

The outdoor facilities that are used for practical skill classes and the field are basically at the far side where the dorms are located, so this part is in essence, not that rough.

And yet, right now I can slightly feel a fighting atmosphere, and I could hear shouts with fighting spirit, even if it was low from here.

Is it the effects of the variant incident?

I made the lectures of Jin and the others be mainly about the reconstruction of the outside district, so I haven't really come to the Academy often, and I don't know the current situation.

I had Shiki come to the Academy a few times, but there were no reports regarding this atmosphere.

Well, it may have gotten slightly noisier, but if the motivation has increased in the students, there should be no problem.

I will quickly contact the office department and do the procedures for my class. After that, I will just check on Jin and the others, and then, I don't have any other plans for the day.

No, since tomorrow I have class, even if I don't meet them when I look around, there's no problem.

Going to the office department should be enough.

The longer I stay, the more chances there will be for the Academy Principal to call me.

"Thank you for your hard work~"

“!!”

The first school building is the place where the guests, guardians, and the contractors normally come to.

The students themselves don't go there often, but the school building is always neat, and the maintenance on it is fast.

In the case of this Academy, the school building that the students frequent, is also quite high grade, like one step higher.

This first building can be considered the reception room of the Rotsgard Academy.

I have been here frequently, so I went straight to the office department, and spoke out.

In an instant, the people at the reception room look at me all at once.

W-What's going on?

“Uhm, I am the temporary teacher Raidou. I have come here to present the contents of my class and to change a part of it, so I want to finish the formalities...” (Makoto) “You finally, finally came, Raidou-sensei!”

“Eh?”

“I contacted your assistant Shiki-san several times to have Raidou-sensei come, but at those times, I was always rejected, telling me that you were doing business in other towns. Seriously, I was troubled!”

Aside from the person that immediately came to speak with me in the reception room, several others came to the room as well and approached me.

Glaring, smiles that had been relieved from tension, and there were even some that were sobbing; there were way too many reactions.

Just that, I could nod at the words of that person who said that everyone was troubled.

“I am sorry for being absent all this time. I was called by the Gritonia Empire, and when I left, there was a matter that felt like it might serve as a

new business you see. Uhm...I judged it was best if it was as fast as possible, so I left again. I did leave a notice of my temporal leave, didn't I?" (Makoto) I did ask Shiki to do it after all.

"It is true that we did receive it. Anyways, this..."

What was given to me was a brown envelope.

It is quite big and thick.

When it was given to me, I caught sight of the contents for a bit, and it seems like it is all documents though.

But if they are giving it to me in this way all piled up, I don't think it is something urgent.

It is fine to just confirm the contents of it slowly.

"Let me tell you this, everything in there are documents that have to be urgently confirmed."

...

Seriously?

...All of this?

"Also..."

Soon after, I was given another brown envelope that had the same thickness, filled almost to its limit.

One after the other.

I have six now.

"Next, there's documents related to the Academy's internal affairs, and they have been put together at the neighboring room of the temporary teacher's office. We were told that those documents can't be checked unless Raidou-sensei sees them first, so I requested Shiki-san about it."

"...Why in the neighboring room? It is always left at the desk of the office, right?" (Makoto) "...About that..."

"Yes?" (Makoto)

“Because it couldn’t fit all.”

“Hah?” (Makoto)

“The office is used by other teachers as well, so at the current state, it would fill up around one third of the room in documents. There are also claims because of the lack of answer, so it is not like everything is related to different matters, but classifying them all from our side would be difficult. It took our all just to sort them by date.”

‘I also have other work, you know?’, are the kind of eyes I was making.

“There’s a nonstop flood of enquiries and thought transmissions, not only from the Academy’s foreign affairs, there’s also from the town, and from other countries. A percent of office work is responsibility of Raidou-sensei, in the current office department.”

You are kidding, right?

“ ... ”

I have no words.

I only gulped down.

“The temporary work regarding the reconstruction is also a lot, and we are like this. You must have understood after seeing this, but this is a grave situation for the office department. But you finally came. The arrangement of the documents and the processing of it, from today on, please work on them as you steadily bring them back home.”

“...Y-Yes.” (Makoto)

“And about the formalities for the class, I will hear the concrete contents of it.”

“Increase in students, and...” (Makoto)

“!!”

What a big reaction.

“The limit of classes I have—” (Makoto)

“Can’t do.”

“Eh? Uhm, you should be able to reduce the amount of classes, right?”
(Makoto) “Can’t do.”

“I just have to request for an increase in students and take out the request applications, right? By cancelling the temporary stop of it.”
(Makoto) “Yes, that’s possible. Actually, I have already received a special exception to increase the students participating in your class, so I would like you to please increase it to the present limit of 80 students.”

E-Eighty?

Are you crazy?

Even in Japan, a class was less than half that number.

I don’t even have a teaching qualification, so there’s no way I would be able to teach that amount of people.

It is a class where there’s the risk of injury since they are practical lessons. The major premise is that it has to be limited to a number that Shiki and I can manage.

“...Please don’t say the unreasonable. Even if I say increase, it would be around double of the current state. I was thinking of increasing it to around 4–5 students.” (Makoto) Things like: ‘Impossible.’, ‘Too few.’, ‘Blood will be raining, you know.’, ‘How irresponsible.’, were what they were saying.

“That kind of number is like throwing a pebble in the water, Sensei.”

“Even if you say that, it is my limit after all. I don’t want to be a teacher that lets his students die after all. More importantly, why can’t you decrease the number of classes?” (Makoto) Shiki did say that even if they die, we can somehow manage.

...‘Even if they die, we can somehow manage’?, what kind of somehow?

“If I had to put it in one word, it is the consensus of the Academy.”

“Consensus?” (Makoto)

“Students, teachers, and the factions that are related to management, have stated that it is acceptable for Raidou-sensei to increase the

percentage of work in this Academy, but they don't want you to reduce it. Even though it is a situation where there is a fight for authority, this one point has been approved by them all. We can tell from the large amount of documents, that the students have taken an interest in the teacher after all. And that's why, it will be incredibly troublesome to have you do the opposite of that."

"Even if you say it is troublesome..." (Makoto)

I don't care about those circumstances.

In the first place, I have no intentions of getting involved as a teacher for more than once a week.

Actually, I came here to make it twice a month.

"If you want to reduce the number of classes no matter what because of personal circumstances..."

"Yeah?" (Makoto)

"Please ask that when I am not in charge."

"...Ehm..." (Makoto)

"The employee that approves that right now, would definitely get fired. Finding employment is hard, you know?"

T-That's truly none of my business.

"Are you telling me to have someone, who's prepared to be fired, do it?" (Makoto) I don't mind though.

"We do understand that Raidou-sensei is not doing this because you want to. That's why...can you at least maintain the current status quo, please?"

The eyes of the person in charge glitter.

Don't cry!

"Maintain it huh." (Makoto)

"It will be delightful to increase the number of students, but there's also unreasonable requests we are unable to take, you see. If possible, can I ask

you to please stay as a temporary teacher for once a week?”

“I...will return to the company once and think about it. Then, please resume the acceptance of applications for the class. Ah, right. Do you know where my students Jin, Amelia, and the others are?” (Makoto) I try asking without much expectations

I do have prospects of where they could be, like the self-study outdoor fields.

“They are at the cafeteria.”

“I see. I will go around randomly and... Cafeteria?” (Makoto)

An unexpected answer came.

Why does this person know?

“Yes. Lately, at this time, there’s a variety of things happening in the cafeteria.”

“Variety of things?” (Makoto)

“A variety of things.”

“...For now, I will go check. Thank you.” (Makoto)

Cafeteria huh.

So the lunchtime has been shifted.

I have placed the documents in a big suitcase, so it is hard to walk.

Well, I know where they are already, so I will just head straight to the cafeteria.

The gazes of the students that are frequently turned at me had strange liveliness as always.

The scent of food from the cafeteria grew stronger, and yet, the gazes didn’t change.

“Now that I think about it, even when it is already pass lunchtime, there’s still a set meal that’s still available. It might be good to eat that before leaving.” (Makoto) While having a carefree thought, I enter the

cafeteria.

Jin and the others are...here.

At a long table of the cafeteria, they were having their lunch as they face each other.

...While having a gallery at their surroundings.

Why is there a gallery when eating?

Envy and bloodthirsty gazes were being poured at them.

Maybe because of that, there aren't many gazes turned my way.

I am slightly grateful.

"You are open, Jin!!"

"I am not." (Jin)

Baki

Without even looking back, Jin did a backhand fist towards the face of the hoodlum that suddenly attacked him from behind. The fist caved into his face and the hoodlum is send flying back into the crowd of people.

"I've got you!"

"What did you get? How bothersome." (Amelia)

Amelia evades the flashing dagger that was aimed at her, and thrusts the hand that held a fork.

Suddenly, a scream resounds.

What's with this end of century spectacle? <A reference to fist of the north star (Hokuto no Ken) that is set in a post apocalyptic world that is called end of century time. Thanks Attega and a lot of others that instantly spotted it, lol.> "Sif-senpai, please go out with m—"

Bon!

Even if it was small, a clear sound of an explosion resounded. A love confession that would soften this atmosphere has been shot down.

The one confessing has gotten an afro in an instant and falls speechless.

In a lot of meanings, he was a brave one.

“...”

Sif said nothing.

H-How cruel.

Nevertheless, what a hard to approach atmosphere.

There's most likely a bounty placed on Jin and the others.

If it's in this Academy, the unreasonable demands of the powerful nobles and merchants are normally approved, so it is possible.

And in reality, I had previous experience of suffering at the Academy Festival.

With that much interference, transgressions, moreover, harassment towards me; even if the person in question is dead, the punishment they were given was way too light.

This place is really scary.

The big nobles and merchants are also good at feigning innocence, and on top of that, they are underhanded, which makes it the worst.

When I go to Limia, I might have to meet with people related to that Ilumgand, and that makes me depressed.

It is the country that's taking care of Hibiki-senpai, but for me, it is a target I would want to avoid.

“Sensei!!”

“?!!”

As I get closer to check the situation, Jin's side called me out.

In response, the surroundings get noisy in an instant.

“I have been away for a while, and the Academy has turned dangerous, Jin.” (Makoto) “You saw that just now?” (Jin)

“Yeah. Did someone place a bounty on you guys or something?”
(Makoto) When speaking to students, I speak the same way as I did with

written communication, by talking indifferently.

Because there were harsh impressions like majestic, and weird, when I began speaking.

When I used written communication, the impressions it gave were indifference, composed, and unperturbed, so I am performing in my own way.

“No way. More importantly, it seems like you have resumed the applications for students.” (Jin) Why do you know that already?

Are the rumors in school going at lightspeed?

While I was greeting the other students, Jin speaks about what I did at the office department a few moments ago.

“...You learned of it way too fast. Was it Shiki?” (Makoto)

“No, it seems to be information from a reliable source of the office department. Because of that, it has become like this after all.” (Jin) “By ‘like this’, you mean the strange liveliness that’s surrounding the Academy?” (Makoto) But I feel like the order of events is weird.

“It has been like this since that incident. The students that have begun to crave for power have become more active in practical lessons and real combat has been implemented. There was also an increase in temporary teachers and a reformation of the self-study system. The atmosphere of Rotsgard has changed quite a lot.” (Jin) “Heh~” (Makoto)

Oops.

Be dignified, dignified.

With a stern expression.

“Because of this, there’s the hunted side. Just like this, there has been past occasions where they have surrounded us in this way, but...” (Jin) Saying this, Jin looks at the gallery.

I’m surprised you can eat like this.

If it were me, I would prefer to endure going without one meal, rather

than eating in this atmosphere.

“These guys seem to have learned about the increase in Raidou-sensei’s number of students. Just that, the most it will be taking is around five. And so, to show their own strength and to increase the slots available, it has instantly turned lunch into a thrilling event.” (Jin) They even know the numbers.

How scary is the speed of rumors in Rotsgard Academy.

Walls have ears, and doors have eyes.

No, it is more like everything is made of glass.

“As a teacher, being evaluated so highly is something to be happy about, but...being too dangerous is troublesome. There’s other ways to show your strength.” (Makoto) “Seriously!!” (Amelia)

From within my students that were silent, Amelia shouts loudly.

“Amelia?” (Makoto)

Slightly surprised, I call her name, and she hit the table hard.

“If you really wanted to stealthily have Raidou-sensei evaluate you guys, you should help out on the reconstruction work we are made to do everyday!!! And yet, you didn’t do that at all, and simply went to assault us... Just how much...You don’t know just how harsh it is, you bunch of idiots!!” (Amelia) I did say that if you had free time from classes, you guys should help out with the reconstruction but, she was doing it everyday?

How diligent, Amelia.

Ban!!

Again, the sound of hitting the table. <Stop it, table-san has feelings too!!> This time was, Izumo?

He hit the table with a fist.

He is trembling. It must have hurt a lot. <Table-san: yes, it hurt.> “Exactly! Even though I am a magician, everyone says this: ‘How convenient’, ‘What a great help’. Dragging me around like a work-horse,

and using my magic close to the very limit, they tell me that it was a reward and I, who didn't have the strength left to oppose, was poured down alcohol and greasy food with no taste down my throat!! It was so harsh that I wanted to shout what kind of torture is this!! And yet, the important reconstruction is still not complete and there's still a mountain of things left to do! To be envied by a bunch of bastards that just comfortably attend classes without helping at all, don't joke around!!" (Izumo) "A magician still has it better. When your magic power runs out, it is over, right? But me, I have to cast stamina and physical strength recovery magic, and they use me for heavy labour till the very limits of my physical and magical power! I have already learned how to make a simple house!!" (Misura) After Izumo, Misura's voice trembles.

As a defensive wall-type warrior, it is a given that he has high physical strength, and even if it's unskilled, he can also use healing magic.

I have heard that in constructions, especially in the construction of buildings, they play an active role.

It seems like they have piled up a lot in them but, you two, if it was so rough, you should have just reduced the number to two or three times a week.

It wasn't forced after all.

Counting Amelia as well, how diligent.

"If you are talking about physical and magical limit, I as well." (Daena) ...Daena too?

I have heard from Zara-san that he has been helping as a messenger and delivery of goods.

"But it is still nice for you Misura, you are still single, right? But me, once I return to my room, my wife tells me this: 'Why do you always return so late?', 'Helping out in the reconstruction is not the work a student should be doing, so treasure your family a bit more'. Being super tired and returning in tears, I get those words. It gets to my heart..." (Daena) If it's so harsh, the same thing I said applies to you as well, Daena.

You are married, so treasure that.

Isn't what your wife said correct?

I haven't met her, but I sympathized with his wife.

"But once classes are over, we have to help with the reconstruction. That's why we do our best everyday. These pestering bunch should know of our actions to a certain degree, and yet, they don't even touch that topic. Like that, there's no way we would want to recommend or serve as intermediaries for anyone, right, Raidou-sensei?" (Jin) Jin puts it all together.

I feel like I now slightly understand the strange liveliness and the over excessive actions of Jin and the others.

But...

"No well, Jin, I have somewhat understood what you want to say and the situation. But, I don't remember telling you to help in the reconstruction everyday though?" (Makoto) "..."

...

Starting with Jin, everyone looked at me intently.

The only ones that were normal were the Rembrandt sisters. The only ones who I didn't tell them anything about helping with the reconstruction. The two only smiled at me.

I planned on having them help out as well, but Rembrandt-san had played the first move with Zara-san.

It seems like they sometimes help in the reconstruction, but it was mostly from behind-the-scenes. In the first place, they mostly help out in the work of the Merchant Guild.

His wife did say to treat them the same as the other students, and Rembrandt-san supposedly agreed to it though.

As expected of a shrewd merchant.

"Yusuri-san, she..." (Jin)

“Hm?” (Makoto)

I ask for a repetition of the words Jin muttered.

“After being thoroughly pummeled by Yusuri-san...” (Jin)

“Completely defeated by Zwei-san in close combat.”

“Being unable to even get close to Blue Lizard-san, and be completely wiped out...”

“After that, we were forcefully healed, and in a team fight with everyone, they broke our weapons and heart.”

My students have a pain-filled face as they speak of the situation as if recounting a nightmare.

Around that time when I told them about helping in the reconstruction, I feel like it is true that something like that happened.

“Raidou-sensei told us this when we were totally unable to move: ‘I am counting on you in the help with the reconstruction’. Shiki-san didn’t heal us. Instead, he created a barrier so that the surrounding mamonos won’t get close, and then, he chased after Sensei.”

“...”

Is that so?

I don’t remember well though.

I most likely told Shiki that I would leave him to handle the rest, so I don’t know the details of what he did.

Then Shiki didn’t heal them.

“I won’t be able to forget the starry sky and coldness of that day. I felt like it was engraved in my very bones that I should help out with the reconstruction without missing a day.” (Jin) I didn’t have that intention at all.

It seems like I have made them misunderstand.

But in exchange, it looks like their basic foundation has increased quite a lot, so if the results are good, it is fine. Yeah.

“In the first place, I didn’t have those intentions. From what I see, you have become relatively stronger, so do be satisfied with that. Also, I have gotten permission to use the field for the class tomorrow, so if you are going to attend, don’t go to the reconstruction of the town. Since I am here already, I will directly contact them that you won’t be going. Well then, do your best in the afternoon as well.” (Makoto) “...You will properly give us classes, right?!” (Jin)

“I will have to go to Limia in a near future, so I feel that it would be bad not to do classes a few times before that, as a temporary teacher of the Academy.” (Makoto) I return a positive response towards the words filled with expectations of Jin.

Even if I say classes, it will be just confirming their current state and pointing out their next task though.

Their good part is that I know they will definitely tackle the task to their very best.

As expected of promising students.

“Raidou.”

When I was about to leave, an unfamiliar voice stops me.

I turn to where it came from, and as expected, an unfamiliar face.

A person from the gallery huh.

In that case, a person that wants to participate in my class?

“What?” (Makoto)

Acting as a tired teacher, I ask.

It is my job, so it can’t be helped.

Maybe it will be easier if I switch back to written communication?

“You will be increasing your students in a near future, right?”

“Yeah, I am planning to, that is.” (Makoto)

“When? The information said it was only a few, but is that true? What’s the criteria of the selection?”

“...I am going to Limia Empire, so it will be after that. The information that it will be only a few is true. About the selection, I will first choose by documents. If you want to apply, leave your application before I head to Limia. Does that satisfy your questions?” (Makoto) “So that means the deadline will be until Sensei has left to Limia, right? Then what part of the document will you be taking into account? I want to take it as a reference, so please tell me.”

What a briskly girl.

It does seem like she is trying to hide it, but I understand what this girl is trying to ask, so I should answer it straight and direct.

I want to return quickly after all.

“Aside from grades and fortes, I won’t look at anything else. And if there’s other documents aside from the application form added to it, I won’t take a single look at it. After that, Shiki and I will be watching your performance in person and decide then. That’s all.” (Makoto) “!! Thank you very much!”

I tell her that connections are of no importance.

It seems like she understood what I was trying to say.

But it really makes me waver.

It makes my shoulders stiff, but I should continue with this character.

Maybe I should just return to written communication.

Or maybe go with the disinterested attitude, or with my natural self.

...The third option is a no go.

They are not my friends or anything, and I have no plans in doing that.

This is a job, so I think that there’s the need of a clear line to demarc this.

Ah, should I go to the library...No need for that, right.

The librarian Eva is already not there anymore.

The image of a praiseworthy librarian that will be losing nights of sleep

appears in my head.

Feeling the change in the association with this Academy after all this time, my mouth changes into a smile.

Without returning to my office, I peek at the neighboring room, and it was certainly true that it had become a room of documents.

...Later, I will come together with Shiki to get them.

With this, my things to do are over.

Let's return to the sea-I mean, to Asora.



There's liveliness.

Or more like, bloodthirst?

When I returned to Asora, I was going to go to Ema's place to confirm the people that can be moved before going to the sea, and at that moment, I felt a deja vu.

Ema was making a dangerous face that's normally not seen in her.

I thought that she would be together with Tomoe or Shiki, but the situation and expression is different from my expectations.

At the place where she is -the training grounds outside the town-, aside from Ema, there's several Orcs, Lizards, and one Arke.

Also, small fairies; I think there are about tens to hundreds, but they were confronting Ema as they swarm and float.

Ah, those...if I remember correctly, Antonio-No wait, Al...Al-Efemera!!

Right, right.

But Asora really moves fast.

So they have already brought them.

...Could it be that the sea races are already waiting for the interview?

No way.

“Ema, these guys are the Al-Efemera, right? There’s a strange atmosphere though.” (Makoto) Should I call it a critical situation?

Ema had gotten into a fight with them in the past, so I have a bad feeling about this.

“Oh, Waka-sama! It is not to the point of calling it a strange atmosphere. These people were acting as usual, so we were just in the middle of scolding them.” (Ema) “As usual... It feels like the atmosphere has changed quite a lot though?” (Makoto) “They were just getting conceited by saying things like they dealt with the Riz, and after that, they made several other threats retreat.” (Ema) Because of that?

Leaving aside the King’s attitude, the bunch at his back are radiating bloodthirst.

It is not like it was directed at anyone in specific, it was the type that was scattered to the surroundings.

It resembled the type of bloodthirst that a part of the people, who have taken the bootcamp of Tomoe for the first time, release.

It was like an improvised army.

“Asora’s king! Our name is Al-Elemera! Is the Asora King the kind of person that would forget the name of a race that he has had an interview with?!”

“Eh? Al-Elemera? Ah, I see. I am sorry for my rudeness.” (Makoto) To think that even Shiki couldn’t remember them properly.

Even though they are a feisty bunch, they are not a really memorable race.

“Waka-sama, there’s no need to apologize. For these people, it is enough to call them flying ants. Calling them in an exaggerated name is just a waste.” (Ema) Ema is sharp towards them.

Maybe she doesn’t like their wild behavior.

“It is not a waste! We are the kings of Fairies! When your subordinates are rude, your King becomes rude as well, Orc woman! Just like promised,

we dealt with the Liz, and yet, why didn't you contact us?! If you had maintained your promise, we wouldn't have lost so many comrades!"

It looks like there are a lot flying around, but it seems like the numbers have reduced a lot.

How many of them were there?

I don't remember.

"Ara ara, you call yourselves the Kings of Fairies, and yet, how childish. Did you forget what I said already? I said that: 'Once you deal with the Liz, come here again', you know? If you defeated the Liz, why didn't you come back here? I thought that you were all eaten and had already gone extinct." (Ema) "Like I would know how to come here! That's unfair, Orc woman!"

"In that case, before flying away driven by your anger, you should have told me that: 'After we defeat the Liz, contact us again', right? If we had three hundred of you noisy bunch in Asora, it would be an annoyance. You have been reduced in numbers nicely, ufufufufu." (Ema) Dark.

There's a dark Ema here.

To come to Asora on their own is unreasonable.

They are not Gods.

I don't know what they were crying about at that time, but this is kinda... cruel.

Let's try not to make Ema angry.

When I look, the other races had a bitter smile.

A part of the Orcs had blue faces.

Could it be that Ema still has more to bring out?

If there's still more changes to her, I don't want to see them.

Even so, Ema seems to know these guys well, so she most likely knew that I had gotten their name wrong, moreover, she even knew how many they were.

If they had three hundred, their numbers decreased by around $\frac{1}{3}$.

That's quite the damage.

"Why didn't you tell us this, King of Asora."

"Eh? Even if you ask me that..." (Makoto)

"You were the one who let us go! Ehm...ehm...King of Asora!"

...

Ah, could it be, they also forgot my name?

If memory serves right, they haven't called Ema by her name either.

What, so it goes both ways.

"Of all things, to snap at Waka-sama again... I'm already...ufu, ufufufu... Just like last time, I let off this guys because they were brought by Mio-sama, but it seems like there's no need for that now. Even though we were slightly pitying you and reconsidered the migration of you guys..." (Ema)
"We passed the ordeal! The abundant forest we lived in has been engulfed by an abominable purple cloud and it is already a poisonous swamp. We don't have a place to live! We will live here!"

Oh, his haughty attitude is unbreakable.

Personally, I prefer to watch this liberal type of people from a far away distance.

If it were in TV, I would like to watch it.

Asora is big, so if we just find a random dwelling for them to live in, I don't think it would pose much trouble.

With the addition of a sea, the scale of Asora is big enough to even make it a pain to calculate.

"...I see. Then live here. You said you liked forests, right? Live in whatever forest you want." (Ema) Is what I thought, and Ema says just what I was thinking.

Based on her attitude until now, this is unexpected though.

Also, it is unexpected that she would decide this kind of things by herself.

Even though she normally comes to us for permission.

“!! Those words, I certainly heard them!!”

“Just that, we won’t relate to you in any way. But if you want to no matter what, you can grovel on the ground and beg, and I will think about it.” (Ema) “Listen, everyone! We have obtained a new home! Okay, we are going to that forest there! Hurry and create our houses! Gather food!!”

“OOooooh~~!!”

“...”

The Al-Elementa fly all at once.

It is like honeybees moving.

While looking at them fly away, I glance at Ema who is beside me.

She has an incredibly good smile.

It makes my back shiver though.

I instinctively turned my eyes away, but it was a wide smile.

“Now then everyone, let’s return to our jobs. Even something called a sea has appeared, so we will have to think about the logistics of Asora.” (Ema) “Right.”

Me and everyone else nods.

“Waka-sama, regarding the races that live in the sea, and the races that can possibly live in it; there’s a list about them now. I think the list will get bigger but, can you give it a check?” (Ema) “Yeah, got it.” (Makoto)

“Shiki-sama was saying that we should open that part of the beach and create a port. For now, we have moved a few Eldwas over there. The craftsmen that are at the port city outside, said that they will return to Asora if there’s a need for boats.” (Ema) Oh.

Without resting for a day, they have immediately moved.

For me who leaves tomorrow's things for tomorrow, this is an unbelievable speed.

Ema was giving accurate instructions to the races that were with us.

It was such a change that it felt like the conflict just now didn't happen.

"Uhm, Ema, about the Al-Elamera..." (Makoto)

"Yes, what is it?" (Ema)

Even so, it was bothering me, so I tried asking.

"Why did you easily let them migrate? Even though you were quite angered." (Makoto) It wasn't a flow where she would be letting them at all, and there was no apology from them, and yet, why?

"I have gone too far in front of Waka-sama. I am very sorry." (Ema) She first apologized to me.

"No, don't mind it. Just, why?" (Makoto)

"...Waka-sama, do you know what happened to the mamonos that Tomoe-sama threw here?" (Ema) "Mamonos like the Liz?" (Makoto)

"Yeah." (Ema)

"If I remember correctly, I heard they were exterminated by things like wolves, bears, oxen, and wild boars." (Makoto) "That's right. They have been practically wiped out." (Ema)

"..."

"..."

"Uhm you see, even if you tell me 'that's right'..." (Makoto)

"Waka-sama is not giving them their protection. In other words, those guys that are deemed as a differing force, are not much different from mamonos." (Ema) No different from mamonos, she says.

Meaning...

"A poor excuse of fairies that consider something like a Liz as a threat, and have been reduced by almost half in numbers in this short amount of

time, moreover, with that level of intelligence; they will definitely ignore the warnings of the wolves-dono. I don't do pointless lies, so if they end up fewer than half their numbers and grovel on the ground... Fufu, I will think about it." (Ema) Uwaaa.

Dark Ema has evolved into Abyssal Ema.

"Asora is certainly a paradise. There's no strife between races like in the wasteland, and there's an extensive land, so there's no need to fight for it. However, there's rules in Asora as well. Outlaws that don't follow this and just live by their own rules, will be exterminated by nature." (Ema) "Rules in Asora huh." (Makoto)

Nothing comes to mind.

"Strength or protection; if they don't have any of these two, this place cannot be considered a complete paradise. The beasts that originally live in this place are powerful after all." (Ema) Once again, Ema laughs violently.

An Asora that's not a paradise huh.

Surrounded by games and internet in my original world, I was filled with entertainment, so there's a part of me that finds this place slightly boring, but the other residents voice out with truest sincerity that this is paradise itself.

That's why I also thought that this place was plentiful and easy to live in.

From what Ema said, when your position and allies change, this place will not always be a paradise.

I didn't think about it.

I really am no good with 'looking at it in the perspective of others'.

I shift my sight from the scary smile to the list that was given to me.

Half-fish race, mermaids, sea anemones, and joke-looking people that have the body of a fish and human limbs.

It was truly a list of water races.

There will most likely be candidates from Tomoe and the others, so I will take those into account when I think about it.

The sea is vast.

If they want to, I don't mind having all of them living there.

Chapter 196: Unknown Sky

Sari was looking at the stars while feeling deep unpleasantness for being unable to arrange her mixed thoughts.

Her eyes were distant as she kept looking at the stars.

“The scale is one, two, three, or maybe four...no, that’s not it.”

She mutters lowly.

Without being heard by anyone, those words fade and vanish.

“Even though what I have to do hasn’t changed, I can’t move.”

For her, this was something unusual.

Think and act.

She has never hesitated in acting.

Abandoning her own position till now, she easily did something like engraving the slavery stigma onto her body, and the actions following that.

And this here is the result of it.

In the next move, she has to enter deep into Raidou’s domain. And yet, in this place that he has brought her into himself –In Asora-, Sari has been unable to make contact with Raidou properly.

The actual state of affairs is that the time she has been staring at the starry sky has increased.

“Could it be that Raidou is the king of a different world?”

Sari looked at the starry sky and thought this.

It is heavily different from how Raidou himself sees it, but the understanding of Sari wasn’t that far from reality.

He has a space called Asora.

That space has been expanding in size, and currently, it has a vast land, sky, and sea. It is already in a state where it is fitting to call it a ‘world’.

And one can only enter Asora with them as intermediaries, and they

themselves can enter and exit as they want.

From the standpoint of Sari who doesn't know the circumstances, Raidou is the king of a parallel world, and she is a guest of his world. Without any decorated words, she can even be considered an 'intruder'.

His attitude of antagonising the Goddess could now be understandable in her view.

But if that's the case, the fact that 'Raidou is a hyuman', would be a contradiction in itself, is how Sari thought.

Or could it be that there's hyumans in parallel worlds as well, and this world is under the protection of an existence like that of a Goddess?

If that's the case, why is there no other hyuman in this world called Asora?

What about an existence that is related to that Goddess?

For a while since she is been here, Sari has been flooded by this thoughts that had no answers, and was unable to act.

"Anyways, becoming a friend of Raidou is the first priority. If I become a close friend of his...Raidou probably wouldn't do 'something as meager' as turning his fangs towards the demon race..."

Raidou 'always' moves by his emotions.

That's what Sari guesses.

That's why, she will be by his side, and if she is able to change those emotions of his, she will be able to obtain safety.

She has been calmly looking at Raidou when she was outside, and that's why, she reached this conclusion and acted in this way. It could be said that she got a good grasp on him.

...It can't be considered a perfect analysis though.

In Sari's view, it was a scary result.

If imprudently dealt, Raidou might not even care about the whole picture, and destroy a country and race just because of a reason like being

asked by someone close to him.

If someone with a deep hatred towards the demon race becomes a close friend of his, or a lover, there's a possibility of Raidou turning hostile towards the demon race.

Things like diplomacy, period, or economics; those kind of things would hold no weight.

If even Raidou turns into an enemy, added with the heroes and the Goddess, the demon race will be exterminated.

Sari was sure of this.

Looking at Asora, she thought exactly like this.

"Totally self-sufficient. Even though powerful races are mixed here, they have an army that works together splendidly well. They clearly possess crafts that surpass ours by several steps. A teleportation ability that not only makes it possible for them to attack any place without the need for a march, it can also be used for retreats. Added to that, there's the abnormally high individual battle power of the close aides of Raidou." (Sari) If she had to put out a weakness of them, it would be their numbers.

Asora doesn't have that much population.

For a fertile land, it has a low population to the point that it was strange.

Sari still didn't know of the reason why.

But even the humans that are the strongest force in her world, would they really fight against them just because they are winning in numbers, when all of these disadvantages are lined up?

If her father the Demon Lord had accurate information of Raidou and Asora, what would he have done? She tried to imagine it.

"Even if it's slightly disadvantageous, he would probably make an alliance. Fufufu, it doesn't sound like it would be a talk to a company, but a talk between countries." (Sari) By the way, if Sari were the Lord, she would have wished to migrate into this Asora.

But that's because she still hasn't been in a position of responsibility

within the race, and he is a rare type of hyuman that the demon race doesn't hate.

As long as Raidou acknowledges it, it would be a great proposal that would lead to the least sacrifices, and would bring a peaceful future.

In a sense, it would be a proposal that would be ideal for the future of the race.

But...

"Without doubt, there will objections from the majority, moreover, there's the danger of me being assassinated for it. The hatred for hyumans...and the will of the demon race. If this is the will of the demon race, his Majesty would oppose this proposition even if it is the path to destruction." (Sari) Sari had a sad expression in her face.

Thinking about her father, this is something that comes into her mind at times; just what kind of existence is an excelling Lord?

There's probably several different types, but the Demon Lord Zef is the type of Lord that would make reality the demon race's will.

For that sake, he would easily shelve his own will.

In that sense, the actions of Zef are incredibly simple.

Pass judgement to the hyumans, and prosperity to the demon race.

That's all.

And those two come in a set.

It can't be toppled.

Sari does think that having the demon race prosper and triumphing over the hyumans is one way of revenge, but most of the demons don't think that way.

They want the blood of hyumans.

"If Raidou were to approve of the demon race's objective of passing judgement to the hyumans, there would be a different path. Just that, the chances of it are way too low." (Sari) In the end, she couldn't put anything

in order.

It was at that moment...

“Sari, are you available now?”

“!! Yes, go ahead, Waka-sama.” (Sari)

Sari heard a voice there’s no way she would hear wrong.

By the way, the one who opened the door was the owner of the voice.

The lifelong master of Sari; the person who she bounded her own stigma with.

No one was accompanying him today.

Without knowing about her worries at all, Raidou naturally entered her room.

“You don’t look well. Are you okay?” (Raidou)

“I’m okay. I am just slightly in disorder because I am still not used to my surroundings. I am sorry for making you worry. Is there something you needed?” (Sari) “I wanted to have Sari work a bit in something, you see.” (Makoto) “Just say the word. Giving this much hospitality to a slave like me, there’s no need to be reserved.” (Sari) These were the true feelings of Sari.

As a slave, Sari has received a better treatment than what she was prepared for.

They are not forcing her into any work, so right now, the treatment they are giving her is like that of a guest.

It was temporary, but she was still in an unbelievable situation.

“I see. Tomorrow morning, there’s a race I want you to meet. Meet them, and well, I want you to hear their requests and what they have to say.” (Makoto) “I don’t mind but, is that a job that’s okay for me to be doing?” (Sari) Even with this light explanation, it was clear that this had an atmosphere different from that of a miscellaneous job.

Because of that, Sari asks to confirm.

“Yeah. We are low in people, and Shiki did say that you seem to have past knowledge.” (Makoto) “...Meaning that I can be useful, right? Understood. I am happy that you believe in me enough to give me work.” (Sari) “Because you can’t betray us, right? With the ritual and all that.” (Makoto) “Yes. I don’t have the intentions to betray you either, and I can’t betray you. Even so, you don’t have any suspicions that there may be some sort of loophole. I am truly lucky that the person I have decided as my master is an open-minded person.” (Sari) “...Loophole huh. I didn’t even think about it. Because there’s no need to think about it, right?” (Makoto) “Is that so?” (Sari)

“Yeah. Because if you do something like that, Sari would be my enemy, right? You must have some reason to work under me with the resolve to die, so something as careless as that, the intelligent Sari wouldn’t do that.” (Makoto) “...”

“I am not good at thinking that much. Betrayers are enemies, contributors are allies. That’s how I think, and that’s all. I want to go simple.” (Makoto) What a scary thing to say, is what Sari thought.

“For example; in the case that it looks like a betrayal when it was actually for the good of Waka-sama?” (Sari) “If I notice that it is good, then an ally; if I don’t notice it, enemy. Simple, right?” (Makoto) “...”

Raidou nonchalantly said this.

On the other hand, Sari was speechless.

She added into her data that he is someone with a thought pattern that’s scarier than she originally thought.

“Hm? What’s wrong?” (Makoto)

“Nothing. I will keep those words in mind.” (Sari)

“...I see. And so, about the race I want you to meet.” (Makoto) “Yes?” (Sari)

“There’s a race that wants to migrate to this place you see, a race called Lorelei. It seems like they were originally from the demon race, but as they were living in the sea, it seems like they have become a different race and

things changed. Have you heard about it?" (Makoto) "...Lorelei?!" (Sari)

"Good, it looks like you know them." (Makoto)

"I have heard that in a long past, there was a household of the demon race that was called Lorelei that had escaped into the sea and disappeared." (Sari) "Then it is probably them. Their outward appearance is similar to the demon race after all. It seems like they were in quite the cold sea, but because of a slight connection, there was talk about having them migrate here, you see." (Makoto) "Migrate?!" (Sari)

"And so, there's going to be an interview. But there's the need to arrange the information of the race and the requests the other side has beforehand, right? I am counting on you for that." (Makoto) "...This place accepts the migration of a race?" (Sari)

"Yeah, well, depends on the situation though. This time it is applications for people that live in the sea, it seems." (Makoto) "It seems? Wasn't Waka-sama the one who ordered it?" (Sari) "Ah, would that be the case? Asora is big after all. Even if everything moves as I order, there's just no time. The people that want to live here can participate in an interview by all means, is how I feel. But in reality, there's a lot going on, and it can't go smoothly like that." (Makoto) "...Is that so." (Sari)

"Sari, you can have a house made somewhere eventually. If you want to, after the migration of the Lorelei is decided, it should be fine to live with them. It seems like you were the same race in the past after all." (Makoto) Raidou continued making carefree statements.

But he is the king of this Asora.

"I-I see... Uhm! About the investigation, I will properly do it. Is it okay to begin starting tomorrow?" (Sari) "Yeah, I am counting on you. I will place a Gorgon and an Orc to assist you, so go at it without pressure." (Makoto) (...Is it for surveillance? Or is it really out of goodwill? This plan is probably from someone else, so there's that chance, and it makes it hard to tell.) (Sari) "Sari?" (Makoto)

"Ah, sorry! Thank you for your kindness, Waka-sama." (Sari) "Well then, good night." (Makoto)

“Good night.” (Sari)

Sari still doesn't know Raidou's real name.

She hasn't been told.

Leaving aside Raidou himself, she is in a situation where her surroundings don't trust her.

She doesn't know that reality, but she does feel like she is being tested.

Even if she is ready or not, Sari thought that from now on, it was a critical moment for her.



“Ah, Shiki. About the preliminary investigation, I have requested it from Sari just like you told me.” (Makoto) “Thanks, Waka-sama. If we don't make those kind of people work, it would be a bad example. You have been a big help.” (Shiki) “I was being reserved because she was a girl after all. Because you told me, it served as a chance. The one that should be giving his thanks is me.” (Makoto) “I am grateful to hear that.” (Shiki)

“By the way, what's that?” (Makoto)

After returning from asking Sari to investigate the Lorelei, I met with Shiki and follow his gaze, and there, I saw Ema and the Al-Elamera.

Just that, the Al-Elmeras that are always flying around, are now on the floor.

What a rare sight.

Reflexively, I ask Shiki for an explanation of the situation.

“Ah, just like you see. The Al-Elamera are, how to say it, partly similar to Waka-sama.” (Shiki) “Ehm...” (Makoto)

I couldn't understand the meaning of Shiki's words.

“Looking for a place to live in, they were strolling the forest, and in the very first day, they broke onto the den the wolves live in.” (Shiki) “... Uwaaa” (Makoto)

All of a sudden they were at that place huh.

What an unlucky bunch.

Ah, they are indeed similar to me in that part.

“They were splendidly scattered and are now like this. Not everyone can cut through their bad luck like Waka-sama does after all. Well, it can be said that they are normal.” (Shiki) “Now that I look properly, they are doing dogeza. Ah, Ema did say something like that. I see...the king and the important people are doing dogeza huh.” (Makoto) “No, all the race is.” (Shiki)

“...Quite a big part was caught by the wolves huh.” (Makoto)

Their numbers are a lot less than when I saw them last time.

The wolves against them wouldn't even amount to a fight.

“They have been scared witless and have run back here.” (Shiki) The wolves of Asora are crazy strong.

No, it seems like the living beings of Asora in general are quite strong. The carnivorous beasts are especially strong within that group.

Currently, the wolves are in the strongest class.

If it turns into a serious fight with them, even Orcs and Lizardmen might be in danger.

They are like experts in forest and group fights.

...The first time I encountered them, I was truly relieved that I was sturdy.

Also, I was deeply moved when I was able to speak with the wolves.

Because of reasons, I am the only one that's able to though.

Well, wolves are intelligent, so even without speaking, they are able to communicate with their actions.

They properly give warnings.

The problem is if the other side complies with those warnings.

And it seems like the Al-Elamera weren't able to do that.

“...I wonder if Ema will forgive them.” (Makoto)

“Even if she does, the Al-Elementera will probably not be able to lift their heads to Ema anymore.” (Shiki) “Now that you mention it Shiki, it wasn’t Al-Elementera.” (Makoto) “My apologies. Remembering the names of something like flying insects, is pretty difficult huh.” (Shiki) He easily admitted it.

He didn’t even try to smooth it over.

“Even though they are feisty, their impression is weak after all.” (Makoto) “Seriously.” (Shiki)

“Ah, by the way, did you hear the talk about what they said of their forest?” (Makoto) “If I remember correctly, it was done in by a purple cloud.” (Shiki) “Do you know the details?” (Makoto)

“Yes. It is a big disaster, but it is a phenomenon that happens pretty often in the wastelands. Thick accumulated dark purple clouds bring about strong rain and it fills the land in poison.” (Shiki) A cloud that rains down poison huh.

Sounds dangerous.

I am glad I didn’t encounter that when I was in the wasteland.

When he says thick and accumulated, does he refer to a form like that of a cumulonimbus cloud?

If that’s in purple color...it would have quite the intensity.

“That’s troublesome.” (Makoto)

“It is only possible to take refuge, so things like bases that have a set location would be completely wiped out. Just that...” (Shiki) Shiki who was explaining, slightly hesitates in saying the next.

“Just that?” (Makoto)

I urge him to continue.

“I heard this from Tomoe-dono, but that purple cloud isn’t actually from the weather; it is actually a living being.” (Shiki) “Living being? A cloud

is?” (Makoto)

That’s hard to believe.

“She said they were a group of small gas living beings. Normally, they are not much of a threat, but when it surpasses a set number of them, they grow bigger in a breath and bring about disaster. As expected of someone that has lived a long time, she has quite the vast knowledge.” (Shiki) “A gas living being. As I thought, it just doesn’t ring well.” (Makoto) “But being a living being means it has life force, so in other words, I thought that it might be possible to kill them or scatter them.” (Shiki) “I see. It is certainly true that if we kill the living, they will stop.” (Makoto) “But well, they are special beings that move in group, so if they are a gas type where each one is as small as a grain, trying to kill them might not be realistic. It doesn’t have much relation to Asora in the first place, so I don’t think there’s much need to research it.” (Shiki) “I want to see it at least once. How about you, Shiki?” (Makoto) “To tell the truth...I am also interested. There’s a mountain of work to do, so right now I can’t move though.” (Shiki) “Hm...in that case, how about asking Tomoe and Mio to bring a sample?” (Makoto) “It seems like the two of them are busy as well, so... how about asking the Winged-kin? It seems like they haven’t heard of it, but maybe they will be able to bring new information of it.” (Shiki) “As expected of Shiki. Yeah, let’s try that!” (Makoto)

If it has an interesting special characteristic, I might be able to use it in the lectures of the Academy.

In the case that it is hard to utilize, it would be biohazardous, so I will refrain from using it.

Even if there’s still a brief time before going to Limia, I still have to do the things I can do at Asora and the Academy.

“But I think that it will be impossible to utilize it in the lectures of the students.” (Shiki) “...As expected of Shiki. Wait, since when did you learn to read minds?!” (Makoto) “Guessing what my master thinks, is a basic skill of a butler; is what Morris-dono said, so I tried learning it.” (Shiki) It is not ‘I tried learning it’.

That's normally not possible.

"You are a diligent one, Shiki." (Makoto)

"I am honored." (Shiki)

'Maybe I should just throw all the classes in the Academy to Shiki', is what I slightly thought.

Chapter 197: Like a Phoenix

“Wa~, how splendid. So that’s the purple cloud that’s been doing no good.”

At a certain place of the wasteland, looking up at the sky, there’s a purple cumulonimbus cloud.

It had a magnificent size and height.

A purple cloud in the blue sky.

What a highlight.

“It has quite the scale. With this, counting the location, a lot of casualties might be brought about.”

The one who accompanied me when I said I wanted to see a purple cloud if there’s one out, was Tomoe.

Quickly investigating the area that it appeared in, she brought me here.

“Place? Around where is this in the wasteland?” (Makoto)

“At a considerably eastern part. The mountain range that can be seen at the front is dividing the lands other than the wasteland.” (Tomoe) Tomoe points at the mountains rising perpendicularly.

Obviously, I can’t see the other side.

“When you say east, does that mean it doesn’t have anything to do with Tsige? There’s no base here so, where would the casualties come from?” (Makoto) “Lorel Union. At the other side of this wasteland is the Lorel Union. If I remember correctly... there isn’t such an important place or a big town in the maps, but there should be a forest and a river, so those will be exposed to damage.” (Tomoe) “The wasteland is really vast huh. It even makes contact with Lorel territory.” (Makoto) There’s no accurate portrayal of the wasteland in maps, so I didn’t know.

“The mountain range continues on for quite a long way, so it doesn’t feel as if it is making contact with Lorel after all.” (Tomoe) “If I remember correctly, Lime is currently there, right?” (Makoto) Hibiki-senpai is in Lorel,

and Lime is telling us her movements.

It seems like he is going together with them, and the detailed information reaches Tomoe's place.

"Yeah. I am already thinking about having him return soon though."
(Tomoe) "That means Hibiki-senpai and her group are about to return to Limia?" (Makoto) "That's what's expected. I have been unable to make contact with him these last few days, so it is only a guess though."
(Tomoe) "If it's Lime, he should be fine. Senpai is also there after all."
(Makoto) Tomoe makes a slight face of unamusement.

"Is Hibiki that much of a person? It is certainly true that her head works relatively well, but I honestly don't think she is as high as Waka praises her to be." (Tomoe) "I think that Hibiki-senpai is a genius. To the point that I wouldn't be able to believe that she is only one year apart from me. I do think that my bow skills can be considered a talent, but Senpai is really a person that can do anything." (Makoto) "Aren't you over evaluating her?" (Tomoe)

"Really?" (Makoto)

"It is certainly true that she has excelling points, but I think that Waka is an even more excelling existence. That's how I feel. It is hard to say this, but Waka's evaluation of Hibiki might enter into the category of admiration." (Tomoe) "...Maybe. If Senpai were exactly as I had imagined her to be, she wouldn't be in this parallel world in the first place. I wasn't able to ask her about this the time I met her, but well, I admit that admiration is mixed in it." (Makoto) "Waka won't grow dependant on Hibiki, but it looked like she had more talent in being a politician than being a warrior. It might be unnecessary, but just to give you a slight warning." (Tomoe) "Thanks, Tomoe. I will be careful." (Makoto)

Well, even if she says that, I don't think that Hibiki-senpai would set me up.

There's no reason for that.

Leaving aside Tomoki, I think Senpai is okay.

I did give a warning to Tomoki after all.

“...And so, Waka, have you seen plenty enough of that purple cloud?”
(Tomoe) “Even when we call it, there’s no reaction. It seems like it is impossible to communicate. I think there’s a way, but...there’s no need to go that far.” (Makoto) “Then you don’t mind heading back now, right? Later you have classes, and there’s also the contact of Limia. Shiki has gone to Rotsgard first, so Waka should also go soon.” (Tomoe) “Yeah. It doesn’t seem like it can be used in my lectures after all. Next is...”
(Makoto) I call Azusa and set an arrow.

“Waka?” (Tomoe)

“If we leave it be, it will head to Lorel, right? That place is working as a receptacle for otherworlders, so I was thinking about helping them a bit, you see.” (Makoto) “In that case, the debt would be bigger when damage is caused, you know?” (Tomoe) “Hahaha, how to say it, it is not like I want them to be indebted.” (Makoto) “Compassion is not for others to see, or something like that?” (Tomoe) “It is a bit different from that too.”
(Makoto)

Preparing the arrow, and in a stance where my aim is plenty enough, I answer Tomoe.

The location I placed my aim at was a core-looking part that I found by using [Sakai].

At a point where it is especially thick in density within that gas formed cloud.

If I shoot there, it will probably show results.

What Tomoe said might be close to how I feel, but it is slightly different.

I look for a word that might serve to denote it.

“Ah, right. ‘Sending a favor’, might be closer.” (Makoto) Releasing my arrow, I speak out the words that I felt were most appropriate.

“Sending a favor?” (Tomoe)

“They gave a home to the Japanese otherworlders that fell into a

parallel world. Leaving aside their motives, I think there were many who were saved because of that.” (Makoto) “Well, that’s probably the case.” (Tomoe)

“That’s why I felt a debt towards that action of Lorel, and I am returning that debt. It is not a debt that I received though.” (Makoto) “Is that something the preceding Japanese wished for? To return the favour of people you don’t even know of, it is a feeling I don’t understand well. I also don’t understand why you won’t look for a reward in this matter.”

(Tomoe) The place that the arrow pierced had a hole opened in it, and with that as the starting point, the purple cloud scatters.

The resistance was low.

It is true that it shot through the target, and yet, it felt like it was a fake.

It is the peculiar feeling of an archer that was telling me this.

But it is certain that I did shoot through their link, so it’s probably not gonna turn into a big disaster.

Frankly speaking, the fact that the sensation of ‘killing’ it is not clear is making me have a bad feeling.

Even if I want to confirm it, I don’t have the time.

Well, if anything happens in Lorel, I have the reports of Lime.

It should be okay to deal with it when I learn of it.

“Why I did this, or anything further than that, even I don’t completely understand it myself. Just that, since they took care of my fellow Japanese, I thought of helping them out a bit. Sending a favour is just how I called it.” (Makoto) “So my learning is still lacking huh. I have to devote myself more. No matter the case, it was splendid. With this, it will probably be unable to create any big evil.” (Tomoe) “Ah!”

Damn it!

“What’s wrong?” (Tomoe)

“Sample. Shiki said he was interested as well!” (Makoto)

“If it’s about that, I have already collected it and send it to Asora. If it’s only a small amount, it shouldn’t pose any danger, and it won’t pose any problems either.” (Tomoe) “...I’m glad. Then, let’s go back.” (Makoto)

“Understood. About the people that are going to migrate to the sea, I am thinking about selecting them with the idea of Waka. It will probably take a whole day with Mio and I. If I think about the dried anchovies I will be able to grill, this cannot be called a pain though. Fufufufu~~” (Tomoe)

“Prepare a kotatsu and oranges.” (Makoto)

“Well well, I am looking forward to it.” (Tomoe)

Now then, I wonder how Jin and the others are doing.



[Now then, it has been a while since our last lecture.]

Shiki and I were at the outdoor field of the Academy, facing the students.

But what’s bothering me is not the serious expressions of my students, it’s the massive amount of gazes being poured at us.

[There’s a lot of spectators.]

[I want you to step back so that you don’t get injured though.]

The later half, I write it towards the students that are spectating.

But the response that came back was mostly about them not minding.

Even though most would leave after saying this in the past.

Well, if they say it is okay to get injured, it is fine then.

The contents of it are the same as what I applied at the office department after all.

[How enthusiastic. Well, okay. Just like always, we will be doing a combination of mock battle and reflection.]

Jin silently lifted his hand.

[What is it, Jin?]

“Who’s the opponent? We want to change our formation depending on

it.” (Jin) It seems like they have been thinking about it a lot and have prepared for the lesson.

Truly zealous.

Comparing it to when I was in senior high school, it makes me feel embarrassed.

But this time would trouble me.

Because I want to see their current skills after all.

[First of all, I will have everyone face a new opponent. The contemplation of it will come later as homework. The mock battle will be with a long distance and close combat. We will be doing a mock battle with the party that you have assigned for it, and do a contemplation and discussion of it. These are the plans for today.]

“A-A new enemy?” (Jin)

Without the need to wait for Jin’s words, tension runs within the group of students.

I wanted to see how much strength they have against an enemy they don’t have information or countermeasures of, and then, after carefully seeing it, I will decide how to train them.

...But the opponent is someone that, if I could take my time looking at the fight, they would already reach the approved line though.

“There’s no way...it could be Shiki-san or Sensei, right?” (Amelia) Amelia asked nervously.

...

Eh? Did their heads get slow because they tasted being matchless in this End of the Century-turned Academy?

“There’s no way Waka-sama or I would be your opponents. If you get conceited like that, you will bring about unnecessary injuries you know, Amelia.” (Shiki) “Sorry!!” (Amelia)

Shiki says it for me.

With how it looks, I will have to wring them a bit harder huh.

[Then, prepare.]

“Raidou-sensei! When you say ‘as always’, you mean...everything goes, right?” (Yuno) Yuno asks for confirmation.

[Of course. Struggle with everything you have.]

“Understood!!” (Yuno)

It seems like she has a hidden card.

The students that were guided by Shiki take their positions, and then they make their formation.

...They are divided in a standard formation of vanguard protecting the rear guard.

They don’t know what will be coming, so they are going to face it with the standard first huh.

That they don’t have a clever scheme might be an indication of their self-confidence.

Now then, let’s call them then.

The two are busy, so let’s go with a time limit.

I confirm the situation with thought transmission, and then, I open a door for Asora.

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

The ones who appeared were two.

The two were looking at their surroundings and confirming their opponents, and after bowing once at me, they looked towards Jin and the others, and took their stances.

“Then, I am counting on you; Ema, Agarest.” (Makoto)

I whisper towards the two.

Confirming that both nod, I take distance from the place that will most

likely turn into a battleground.

The opponents of Jin's group this time are Highland Orcs.

Number one magician, Ema; and the number one warrior, Agarest.

The small height Ema and the giant Agarest that surpasses 2 meters. The difference in height is so big, that one would wonder if they are actually from the same race. But even if they look like this, Ema would win in a long ranged fight.

Now then, what will happen?

Or more like, how many minutes will they last, huh.

While at it, I exchanged looks with Shiki, and he understood what I wanted.

"Begin!" (Shiki)

At the same time as the signal comes, Jin and Daena go for the first move, and dash.

Daena is faster by one body length.

It is a power that he has been training since before the Academy festival.

Without any extra details, it is enhancement to all stats. Daena himself calls it Second Stage.

He is using it from the very beginning.

Compared to the instantaneous enhancement of Jin, its consumption is not good, but to get twice as strong is kinda...appealing.

At that rate, if Agarest doesn't move, it feels like Daena will arrive first by several seconds.

The rear guard didn't move, and while being cautious of the Orcs, they began their arias.

And there's also the vanguard that serves as the role of shield, Misura, standing at the starting point, and it seems he is just waiting and watching.

It is not like they are being overawed or being negligent huh.

Agarest is a macho that looks like a mass of muscles, and in contrast, Ema has a harmless appearance like that of a plushie.

With the first look at them, one would normally get scared or underestimate them, but it seems they are not. That's impressive.

"I will scatter them." (Agarest)

"Yeah, that's what I thought you would say." (Ema)

Looking forward, the short words of Agarest were responded by Ema who is at his back.

Right after, the body of Agarest was wrapped in a dark red light, at its surface, patterns rose and it increased his intensity.

Daeno who saw this, decreased his speed; Jin also grabbed his sword with both hands and took a stance.

Too bad.

The correct answer was to continue running forward.

"Fuh~~"

Pointing his shoulder guard to the front, he holds his halberd with the opposite hand.

Agarest who is heavily equipped, charges power into his body and breathes in. He makes a clear to understand expression.

'I will be rushing now', is what his stance was saying.

No, it's exactly what he did.

"!!"

"Daena, spread!" (Jin)

"Understood!" (Daena)

Being pressed by the pressure, the hesitant Jin and Daena moved.

Their judgment was fast.

Just like what Jin feared, Agarest rushed forward while still enveloped in light.

It was truly the dash of an Orc that left everything to power.

If it were a normal situation, Jin's judgment would have made it with spare time, but there's also the spell of Ema.

I heard that in Kaleneon, he used his whole power and had become stalwart in the fight of Kaleneon.

If Agarest comes flying, it would seriously be no joke.

Agarest passes through the middle of Jin and Daena who had gone to the left and right, and they were assaulted by the squall created by Agarest and the spell of Ema.

"Geh?!"

"A shock wave, and also, heat?! Guh! Damn it!!"

Even though they weren't touched, the two students were fallen on the ground as if a car had crashed on them.

Jin seemed like he still had the ability to speak so, maybe he let himself be blown away without going against it?

It looks like he is not unscathed, but it doesn't seem like he is completely out of the fight.

Daena looks like he is still okay. So his elevated powers saved him huh.

But how will the students that are in the crashing point fare?

Agarest's attack has not even begun.

But this is strange.

His movements were slightly dull.

Did Jin and Daena do something?

"Mi-Misura...I am counting on you?"

Amelia deploys a barrier and takes distance from Misura.

She said it in doubt maybe because the barrier she made herself would

serve for basically nothing, and she is unable to gauge the power of that attack.

Following, Izumo and Sif also create a barrier, and support Misura as they back away.

In a manner that she covers Sif, Yuno also backs away.

...Even if it's his role, it looked like bullying.

All the magician members are already maintaining their magic ready to be activated.

It is impressive that they are able to challenge this when just a few seconds ago they were screaming.

So they will be activating those spells soon, facing Agarest.

Misura...

“Scary. This is seriously scary. A giant mass of steel is charging towards me with enhancement magic. Even if I block him, the people at my back will be shooting the spells and hitting him along with me. Why did I choose to be the role of a wall?” (Misura) “How pathetic to show fear in your face... Hm?”

“... But, this is a lot better than going against Tomoe-san!” (Misura) He became serious again huh.

It is certainly true that Agarest is better than being trained by Tomoe.

It is unreasonable to choose between bad or worst though.

“...Hoh~”

The shoulder guard of Agarest destroys the three barriers without showing much deceleration, and the greatsword of Misura made a dull and heavy sound as they collided.

Normally, because of the height difference, Misura would be sent flying, but...as expected of Misura that is completely specialized in defense.

He is also able to shift the power of the attack well in practice.

There should be quite the shock and damage, but he was able to stop

Agarest.

I also shared the simple surprise of him.

As expected of Tomoe's favorite.

But in terms of follow-up actions, he is out.

"Splendid. I was surprised." (Agarest)

Agarest indifferently mutters.

It may be at this late of a time, but is it okay to be speaking in common language?

Maybe I should have made them mute like the Lizardmen?

Oh, the halberd of Agarest approaches to the side of Misura.

Well, he is already unable to move, so evasion will be impossible.

While Sif and Izumo were preparing their spells, and Amelia her bow...

"Everyone, it still isn't over!!" (Misura)

Misura commands the rear with unexpected words.

And then, as if he had no damage, he swings the great sword that was down, stopped the halberd, and then shifted it aside.

Hey hey.

He should have received enough damage to even reverse his organs.

At the Academy festival, Misura had a dangerous hidden card like ignoring damage, or more like, it was numbing the sense of pain and aiming for a simultaneous strike.

But even if he used it in this occasion, his body shouldn't be able to respond to his call.

Just what did he use?

"Now!!" (Misura)

While I was surprised, Misura shouted this one word that resounded in the whole place.

“Hm?” (Agarest)

Agarest noticed an abnormality from his feet, but by that time, it was already too late.

The ground undulates, wraps around the body of Agarest, and on top of negating the support magic that Ema placed, it restrained his movements.

Sif huh.

Misura received that support, and with a light move, he retreated back.

While that happened, fire and wind raged towards Agarest and was attacked by a fire tornado.

“Guh.”

A linked attack between Izumo and Sif.

With the upper half that Agarest barely managed to free, he swung his halberd and was trying to scatter the fire and wind.

And then, an arrow that had already finished targeting its objective flew into it.

...

It was stopped by the halberd.

As expected of Agarest.

He still has leeway with that toughness.

After that, a magic formation endowed to the arrow exploded as if stolen directly from Shiki's forte.

In that part, Sif is also involved.

By giving firepower of her own to the attacks of others, she is able to make even stronger attacks.

Instead of synthesizing magic on her own, the power and consumption is better this way.

If I remember correctly, that arrow was the one they used to defeat Ilumgand.

Amelia has already completely added it into her repertoire.

They are fighting while thinking well, moreover, they are seriously trying to win.

Everyone has grown more than I thought.

“Just because you are a magician, doesn’t mean I will hold back.”

...

Jin and Daeno who I thought were still recovering, had targeted Ema and charged at her.

So that signal was also for Jin and Daena!

Daena was already at a distance where making an aria was impossible, and Jin stopped his feet at a slightly further away position.

Impressive.

Their foundation is good as well, but it seems like Jin and the others have seriously worked hard to win against the Mist Lizards.

That’s why they were able to prepare a plan like this even when their opponent changed.

Seriously impressive.

“I will seal her movements! Daena, finish it!!” (Jin)

I feel like Jin had activated a magic that was hard to see.

Its presence was strangely dim, so I can’t tell well though.

“Of course. Got her!!” (Daena)

The dagger of Daena approaches Ema, and then...it slashes air.

“...Hah??”

“An illusion?!”

As if the landscape had been rippled like a water surface, Ema’s figure disappears.

It was a good fight.

It was worth seeing.

Sif who won the Academy festival, was called the champion, but if the students that are spectating this spread rumors of this fight, Jin and the others, all of them will be the champions of this End of the Century Academy.

“Hyumans are also beings that can’t be underestimated huh. It has been a good learning experience. But student-san, in the field, what you first have to suspect is camouflaging moves, you know? Especially against opponents that are not moving.” (Ema) “!!”

The voice came from a place slightly further away from Agarest.

At that place, Ema was there.

In reality, Ema was clung onto Agarest and was together with him until the middle.

Because Jin and Daena were blown away, they were unable to catch the real body of Ema.

But even if you call it camouflage...it is quite hard to see through an illusion that has presence.

And when it is a camouflage that is enough to blend into a plain that has a good field of view, I feel like it is already something on another level of camouflage.

Unless it is cancelled, Jin’s group wouldn’t be able to notice.

She is the almighty magician of Asora, Ema-san, after all.

She is in perfect form.

In her surroundings, she has already deployed several magic formations.

Too late.

Jin was punched by several unknown things to the point that he was lifted up to mid-air; Daena was instantly turned into an ice pickle; the footing of Misura turned liquid, and when he was buried up to his neck, the ground turned hard again, restraining him; Izumo silently fell asleep

on the ground.

The remaining were Amelia, Sif, and Yuno huh.

Eh? Now that I mention it, Yuno...

“Rocket Kiiick!!”

Wa?

Aimed at Ema who was activating several spells, something was falling from the sky.

Ema who was aiming to defeat Amelia and Sif, quickly cancelled the two spells, and takes distance from the falling object.

It seems like it didn't hit, but...

Ema was now behind Agarest.

And then, at the falling point...

“...”

Everyone was silent.

That's an obvious state, as there's a strange 'something' standing there after all.

“Why is that thing going to where Yuno is?” (Makoto)

My voice unconsciously came out.

As if being squeezed out.

For a moment, the image of the radical gravure version of Hibiki-senpai came to my mind.

But more than that, this deep crimson suit gave me a headache.

So when Yuno equips it, it is red huh.

No, that's not it!!

Mio, didn't you say that you only created one of those?!

A suit that tells about the preferences of someone completely.

Even though it fell from the sky at high speed, it is completely fine.

Pointless endurance.

An attack power that was enough to gouge a hole in the ground, and a technique name that doesn't match its power.

The thing that I equipped in Limia and pledged not to ever wear again in my life...was there.

"It is okay to utilize equipment from the Kuzunoha Company, right Sensei?! I have taken a liking to this! It is my main equipment! I need a lot of magic power at the time of equipping it though." (Yuno) Please spare me.

"Now then, here I come! This power that I obtained in exchange for the treasured book of mother. I have to create results, or I won't have a tomorrow!" (Yuno) Even if you get results, you are a goner.

Fuh~~

At the same time as I sigh, I face towards the scene.

Agarest has already gotten out of the restrain and is completely fine, and Ema has already taken her stance.

It should be fine to leave it to them, but no, as expected, I will step in.

Shiki is also placing his hand on his head as if holding back his headache.

I can totally understand how he feels.

[Yuno, was that from Mio?]

"Yes, it is from Mio-sama. It was given to me through Beren-san! All-purpose full body armor, trial version, Excavator!" (Yuno) Excavator...

Heavy equipment huh.

Or more like, that thing will actually be able to do a lot.

If Beren is also involved in it, I will have to believe that its capabilities have been limited!

But more than that, just looking at it makes me writhe!

I might die from embarrassment.

[What book did you take out from Oku-sama?]

I have to return it to her.

And I have to give a sermon to Mio.

“All four volumes of Lorel’s local dishes. It was already gathering dust anyways, so...” (Yuno) It seems like the tension has calmed down a bit.

Maybe they were able to guess my actions from now on.

Even if you understand it, it doesn’t mean that I will be forgiving you, you know?

[Yuno]

“Y-Yes?” (Yuno)

[Reflect on it!]

I hit the helmet.

Hit it.

Hit it.

Hit it.

“Kyaa!! Sensei, I am being buried! I will end up buried!!” (Yuno) [Reflect on it in a dark place. Actually, be buried.]

I heard a ‘Kyaaa’, but I ignore it.

I bury her deeply.

No, I hit.

Yuno was safely sunk unto the ground without any regrets.

Finished.

“Ema, sorry but, can you search for those books that Mio seems to have? I will go return them.” (Makoto) “Ah, yes.” (Ema)

Ema who was completely out of combat mode, agreed to what I said.

I will acknowledge their efforts.

Jin and the others have grown stronger.

And there were several parts where I didn't know what they were doing.

It is something that can be solved after asking them later though.

In terms of one talent, they are probably already not at student level anymore.

But more than that, I thought of something scary.

That series, could it be that a number of them have been leaked to this world?

Do they have Crane or Shovel?

If that's the case, a scary contamination might occur.

I have to retrieve them at any cost.

I have to retrieve them all.

"Uhm, Waka-sama." (Shiki)

"Shiki?" (Makoto)

"It seems like we have received a contact from Limia Kingdom. Please return to the company. I will do the reflection and discussion." (Shiki)

"Limia...Limia huh. Honestly, I don't feel like it is the time for that, but... understood." (Makoto) The spectating students that had stopped cheering at the middle of the mock battle and had only been looking in silence, noticed me and opened up a path.

Could it be that in Limia Kingdom as well...no way.

It should be okay, right?

While I was returning to the company, this uneasiness was attacking me.

Chapter 198: Gossip – Hibiki and Lime

‘What am I doing?’

Lime Latte was at a slightly further away place from the camp as he said this monologue.

(Seriously, something is wrong with me. Like this, it really is as if I am in a party.) (Lime) Since the time he saved the priestess Chiya in Lorel Union with hero Hibiki, Lime has been moving together with them.

At first, it was obviously for the sake of gathering information by the order of his superior, Tomoe.

And yet, for some reason, Lime had meshed in with their party, and currently, he has ended up accompanying hero Hibiki because he was asked formally to a mission.

It is an infamous forest, but there were no signs of demonic beasts or beasts coming close to him who was smoking tobacco.

The creatures that live in this forest have recognized that this man that looks defenseless while smoking a tobacco, is actually a strong one.

And so, the natural instincts of the beasts are providing him with safety.

(...Frankly speaking, it is comfortable. As if I am with comrades I have been adventuring together for several decades.) (Lime) There was a reason why he felt like he is together with comrades he has been along with for a long time.

It isn't to the point of decades, but in the past, Hibiki's party had one swordswoman.

A woman by the name of Naval.

Lime knew this from the information he had.

And the fact that he is in the spot she should be.

It is also the reason why at times it felt like he had a set place for him when in battle.

Not only that, Lime actually knew the woman named Naval in more detail than Hibiki herself.

(To think that that Naval was a companion of the hero. She was in Tsige for a temporal time, but... the Vengeance Oni has become quite a kind one. To die for the sake of her comrades is a way of dying that she definitely wouldn't have done in the past. Well, I can't talk about others though.) (Lime) The Naval that Lime knows was an embodiment of revenge that pointed its fangs of hatred towards the demon race.

It is not only once or twice that he has seen people bleach with the blood of the demons.

Their power and gold is all used for the sake of killing as many demons as possible.

That's the kind of woman she was.

But the Naval that Hibiki and Chiya tell him about, were all stories of a charming woman with human kindness.

Thinking that Naval was changed by Hibiki, Lime thought that maybe Naval was happier than in the time he knew her.

He felt something similar to gratitude towards Hibiki.

(You didn't die in loneliness and with a maddened smile. That's great. Moreover, that dancing blade technique is still living within Hibiki.) (Lime) He blows out a big smoke.

A thick smoke that looked as if it could take the whole head. And after he felt that he let out enough, he once again inhales heavily.

(Hibiki is truly a heroic existence. To the point that it is easy to see. That is also because she is purposely acting in that way, and it is also because the people wish that from her. Acting to become the vessel of hopes is not something that a person would be able to do with a normal spirit. I can tell why Boss sings praises of her.) (Lime) In the time that Lime was keeping an eye on Hibiki, he noticed that she was putting on an image of a 'hero' as she acted.

At first, he thought that it was an action of deceiving the general public, but...

(She is doing exactly what's wished for in a hero. What part of that is bad and who would suffer losses from it? She is quite the person.) (Lime) It is certainly true that Hibiki is highly calculative.

To the point that at times, he rolled his tongue as he watched her.

But Hibiki wasn't showing contempt or planning something.

Without denying the image that the populace holds of heroes, she instead accepted it and showed them actions that fit their wishes.

As a result, she has much more support, and people that don't falter in cooperating with the country for the sake of Hibiki, are born.

And Hibiki will have a stronger authority within those people, obtaining the root of support.

No one is losing.

Lime doesn't think of idealistic thoughts like 'it is bad because she is deceiving'.

He is being affected by the charisma of Hibiki and it increases that view of his, but just like Makoto, Lime was starting to approve of Hibiki.

Also...

(I have been ignoring the calls of Sis Tomoe a few number of times already. I do think that something's wrong with me, but...is there an option of following Hibiki like this? No, my life was changed by Boss and Sis Tomoe. To change jobs to Hibiki wouldn't be cool.) (Lime) Lime's worries were that.

The tobacco ashes were falling to the ground three time faster than normal.

It was indicating the distress he was having at this moment.

It seems like Hibiki's way of acting was something that made Lime want to see and continue seeing it from now on as well.

Lately, she has not been asking him to participate permanently in her party.

To take away an employee of Kuzunoha Company without permission is as expected, not something good, is what Hibiki said.

But if in that time Lime has a change of heart, she did say that she would really request it from them.

An invitation that's not forced.

If it's solved peacefully, it would be great, is what Lime said.

And so, Lime was wavering.

Because it was awkward, he was unable to make contact with the Kuzunoha Company, and at the same time, it signified that Lime was leaning towards Hibiki's side.

(Hm? Hibiki huh. How unusual for her to come alone.) (Lime)

The face of Lime that was facing up and down, was now faced towards the side.

Because in that direction, he felt the presence of Hibiki.

"Even though I thought I had properly erased my presence. I can't win against Lime." (Hibiki) "Anything you need?" (Lime)

"You said that you would be eating your meal separately, right? I do have to take care of our helper here after all." (Hibiki) With an accustomed smile, Hibiki gives Lime the plate she had.

When Lime's gaze went to the plate, Hibiki took out the cloth that was on the plate as if she was in a play.

The scent of vegetables and meat spread to the surroundings.

"When the person herself says that she will take care of me... it is just..." (Lime) "It is because it is Lime that there's no need to decorate my words so much, so it makes it more comfortable. I told you before, right? If there's no evil in it, then acting is not something bad." (Hibiki) "...I am an outsider though." (Lime)

“But you are helping us. Even though there’s no need to cooperate with the request of Lorel Union. This is not necessary in the preliminary inspection of the company after all.” (Hibiki) “...Is that steamed food? How? There’s no kitchen. I don’t know how you made it, but it is well made. I will take it.” (Lime) “Ara, you are correct. Even if it’s steamed, it isn’t anything complicated. I also have some convenient cooking methods.” (Hibiki) While giving the food to Lime, Hibiki begins explaining.

While being slightly grateful at Hibiki for understanding that he wanted to change the topic, he took the food.

“Delicious. Even if you stop being a hero, you would be fine. Today was made by Hibiki and Chiya, right?” (Lime) “Thanks. That’s exactly right.” (Hibiki)

“The affinity between the vegetable and meat was well thought out, and there’s the seasoning as well. Even though you are a hero, you are able to do housework. That’s like undermining the whole women out there.” (Lime) “It isn’t something that would trouble me for being able to do it. You as well, for someone that smokes tobacco, your sense of taste is pretty good. Isn’t that also undermining?” (Hibiki) “Ah, you got me there.” (Lime)

After that, Lime gobbles up his food.

Hibiki didn’t hate the silence, and at times, she would make conversation as she stays there.

“Thanks for the food.” (Lime)

“Eating all the food makes me feel good. It was worth making it and bringing it here.” (Hibiki) “And? You didn’t come here just because you were in the mood, right?” (Lime) “It is true that I came to conquer your stomach, you know?” (Hibiki) “Those kind of things, do them for brother Bredda. At my place, there are many people that like cooking, like Sis Mio. Something of this level won’t conquer me.” (Lime) “Too bad. It is about tomorrow.” (Hibiki)

“The purple cloud huh. It seems like it is withering the forest and

approaching at quite the fast pace.” (Lime) Matching the change of mood from Hibiki, Lime also responds seriously.

“Yeah. It possesses strong toxicity, without doubt. It isn’t on a lukewarm level like acidic rain. The fact that there’s few living beings escaping, it should be safe to say that there’s something even more dangerous.”

(Hibiki) “Something that’s making the animals late to run, huh. This is big.” (Lime) “The only ones in our group that can deploy wind to our surroundings while fighting are Wudi and I. Thinking about the danger of the cloud, we have no choice but to place Chiya-chan and Bredda as backup.” (Hibiki) “It was an emergency, so everyone came after all. But I am able to fight while deploying wind, you know?” (Lime) “...If you weren’t part of it, I wouldn’t be here in the first place.” (Hibiki) “I see. In other words, you are asking me to join in the attacking role.” (Lime) “Yeah, please.” (Hibiki)

“How straight.” (Lime)

“ ... ”

It was different from how he felt with Makoto. Lime felt a sensation as if wanting to stretch out his hand.

And from that, the answer was already decided.

If it turns bad, they can just retreat; is what Lime delineated as he nods.

“Understood, I will help you. Seriously, just how much I have lend Hibiki already. You are properly remembering it, right?” (Lime) “You are really a big help.” (Hibiki)

With a wide smile, Hibiki expresses her gratitude to Lime.

She nods once and continued her words.

“If I am to your liking, how about I marry you and return this debt for the rest of my life?” (Hibiki) “What an ill mannered joke. I don’t want to be the man of a hero, what a pain.” (Lime) “Instantly rejected?!” (Hibiki)

“I like all women, but I have never wished for marriage even once.” (Lime) “...You will be stabbed in time, seriously.” (Hibiki)

“I am already tired of hearing that warning.” (Lime)

“Aah, I have been rejected. I am bad at giving up, so I will be tackling it again some other time, okay?” (Hibiki) “You won’t go down huh, as expected of a hero.” (Lime)

“Well then, I am counting on you tomorrow.” (Hibiki)

“Leave it to me.” (Lime)

Hibiki returns.

With just those words said, Lime stayed in place.

(Boss...)

The night was still long.

Lime was troubled once again.



Range.

That’s probably the biggest weakness the hero Hibiki holds.

The fighting power of Hibiki increases every day.

But in regards to long-ranged attacks, it always ends up weaker than those of close combat ones.

This time’s opponent is a cloud.

It is high in the sky.

If you want to attack it, it is obvious that there’s the need of a method to have your attack reach it, or a way to reach all the way there.

For Hibiki, her only option was the latter.

And the magician Wudi and Lime who were accompanying her, will approach as much as possible to the cloud, and while avoiding the poison that is being poured down along with a wind akin to a storm, and the colored rain that would definitely produce damage to the body if made contact with.

They were releasing the attacks that they have thought of and trying to

disperse the cloud.

The actual attackers are Wudi and Hibiki.

Lime was acting as a support.

As long as their opponent is a giant cloud and they are unable to get close to it, it was natural that it would come to this.

Hibiki was currently in the sky.

“This was my trump card though. So even perforating it isn’t showing any effects huh. What should we do? No other choice but to get...closer?” (Hibiki) Hibiki’s tone still had leeway in it, but her expression was quite stiff.

“You can’t joke around. We can’t get closer than this. In the first place, to change your sword pressure in such a way and send it flying is already at plenty of a monstrous level. You can be proud of it.” (Lime) Lime returns a honest opinion to Hibiki.

What Hibiki thought of for a long distance attack, was using the sword pressure as a bullet, an out of norms technique.

But she was able to do that.

She was finally able to do it by borrowing the power of the sacred treasure.

And to release it in full power, there’s also the need for the support of Lime, but she will probably be able to achieve it alone in time.

Her abnormal ideas and her growth that makes it possible.

Lime was looking at Hibiki, and has personally felt the reason why Makoto praised her, but even so, this time’s trump card was a surprise for him.

“If it’s about attack power in one point, you are higher than me, aren’t you? Seriously, to think that I would be slapped in the butt to aim for higher heights at this age. Being a member of a hero party is not gentle sometimes.” (Wudi) Wudi mixes a sigh as he laughs.

He also hasn't been able to produce an effective attack against the cloud.

Frankly speaking, they were at a stalemate.

"This looks like...it will be impossible. Let's return once and make a plan. That's the best option we can choose right now." (Lime) "...If we return, there will be several damages incurred. Definitely." (Hibiki) "People can be evacuated. Villages can be made again. Well, in a different place, that is." (Lime) "Wudi, is there a way?" (Hibiki)

While Hibiki and Wudi were doing thought transmission with the members on the ground and making a plan to break through this, Lime had one idea.

(If I contact Sis, it will probably work out somehow. This cloud is probably something from the wasteland. Looking at the direction it came from, there's no doubt. Sis and Boss might know something about it.) (Lime) But he thinks, that for someone like him that has been attracted by Hibiki and neglected his contacts a number of times, it would be asking for too much.

His pride has already been completely destroyed by Makoto and the others, but he still hesitated.

The reason he wants to be helped is for personal reasons, and there's also the feeling of wanting to help the hero mixed in it as well.

(No, there's no time to be hesitating. This is the last. In terms of time, it is already about time I have to return anyways. If this will save a number of people and children from the villages, there's no need to hesitate. It will result in helping Hibiki. It is just because of that.) (Lime) Lime hesitated and hesitated, and then, he decided.

He sends a thought transmission to his superior, Tomoe.

Tomoe soon responded.

(Sis, it is Lime.) (Lime)

(...It's been a while. Is that side comfortable?) (Tomoe)

The words of Tomoe were as if she had seen through him.

(...I am sorry. I...to the hero...) (Lime)

Lime soon gave up the idea of smoothing it over, and told everything to Tomoe.

(No, I don't mind. I have done something slightly ill-mannered. Sorry for that. Even so, you contacted us. That's fine. What's your situation?)

(Tomoe) But Tomoe controls this and urges him for an explanation.

(Right now there's a purple cloud that is causing damage to the Lorel Union. From my guess, it is probably something that came from the wasteland.) (Lime) (It is close to it-ja na. There's no mistake in that guess.) (Tomoe) (And so, I was wondering if you have any sort of plan to take care of it.) (Lime) (...Fuh~, you have really been taken in-ja na.) (Tomoe)

(Sis, the number one essence of Hibiki is coexistence and mutual prosperity. I think that she would be able to get along well with Boss and us.) (Lime) (That's only if she doesn't throw away that number one essence of hers, that is.) (Tomoe) (Eh? (Lime)

(This is only an assumption, but if Hibiki's way of thinking reverses, she can also become the existence that would hurt Waka the most. You do know the way to deal with people that hurt Waka...right?) (Tomoe) (...So caution is necessary no matter what huh.) (Lime)

(Is how I think. I haven't told this to Waka. You are the only one I have told this-ja zo? The only thing I told Waka was to be careful of the politician after all.) (Tomoe) (...)

Lime was troubled by how to answer.

Hibiki and Makoto can help each other out.

Even though he proposed this, Tomoe was looking at a further future from that.

'Then what can I say?', he was at a loss of words.

(Also, Lime, you still don't understand that our master is Waka.) (Tomoe) (Hah?)

(I will show you a performance with that cloud. Don't move from there. And don't let anyone else move.) (Tomoe) Tomoe cuts off the thought transmission.

"Hibiki, Wudi." (Lime)

Lime simply felt that something was going to happen, and calls for the two that were with him.

"What?" (Hibiki)

"Is something the matter?" (Wudi)

"Don't move from here. Also, tell the two below the same thing, please." (Lime) While saying this, he uses his perception at his surroundings with all his power.

There was something that...caught his attention.

(A gate has opened! The ones that came out are...winged-kin? Two of them.) (Lime) Lime felt that an Asora gate opened at the very edge of his perception range.

It wasn't a coincidence.

It was certain that Tomoe did this on purpose so that he would be able to feel it.

People that have white wings and black wings went high up into the sky.

Winged-kin.

Residents of Asora.

They are at a position that's a lot higher than Hibiki and Lime.

They are higher than the purple cloud.

The winged-kin were going up.

(What? What's going to happen?) (Lime)

"Lime, did you think of a way? Can you tell us, please?" (Hibiki) "I have... played the card already." (Lime)

"Eh?" (Hibiki)

“That’s why, don’t move. Don’t do anything and just watch, please. If you wish for the best, that is.” (Lime) Lime himself doesn’t know what’s going to happen.

That’s why, there was practically nothing he could say.

This time, the winged-kin stopped close to the end of where Lime was able to perceive.

(If I remember correctly...the black winged-kin are able to link information with another person, but...with who?) (Lime) The altitude that the black winged-kin can fly is lower than that of white winged ones.

That’s why they are holding each other in that way, is what Lime could tell.

In other words, the one that’s necessary is the black winged one.

Noticing the special trait of them, Lime tried to infer what was happening, but...the answer soon came out.

“!!! What?!”

“No good, we won’t make it in time for defense!!”

It was a bit faster than the words of Hibiki and Wudi, but well, there was no meaning in the difference in speed though.

From far in the distance, a thick heavy thread of light was aimed at the purple cloud, and Hibiki’s group.

...

(Does that mean I am already not needed? Sis?) (Lime)

With a feeling emptiness, Lime thought this.

But that was only because Lime still didn’t understand him, his master.

The words of Tomoe were correct in a variety of meanings.

(Boss...Well, if I am to be killed by Boss... in the first place, this life was picked up by him. He is a person that would make a person like me believe that he will be able to pull it off even if I am not around anymore.) (Lime) Lime uprightly accepted his death, and then, he closes his eyes.

He can't tell where that attack was shot from.

But Lime was able to understand that the one that the winged-kin was linked with was Makoto.

In other words, this is an attack from Makoto.

The light drew near until it was at the very eyes of Hibiki's group.

In an instant, it spread into several threads and skilfully passed by them, and the fine threads of light pierced the purple cloud.

“ ... ”

There were no words.

Not from Hibiki, Wudi, or Lime.

And from that group, Lime's silence held a different meaning.

(Ah...seriously.) (Lime)

The cloud that was forcefully cut into a thousand pieces, began to scatter.

If he had to compare Hibiki and Makoto, Hibiki would be higher, only if he were to take out one point.

And that hasn't changed at all, even now.

But the meaning of that one point, he probably underestimated it, is what he thought.

No, he noticed that he had forgotten about it.

(This power, this power that is able to hold down anything no questions asked; I was shown this. Right, I...want to see the destination of Boss that is even able to own the land of Asora.) (Lime) Lime still holds good will towards Hibiki.

But he vividly remembered the memories he had in Tsige.

(...To drop in the middle of it would be a waste. I am a member of Kuzunoha Company, Lime Latte.) (Lime) “Now then, let's return. We are done now, after all.” (Lime) Looking at the blue sky that didn't have a

single sign of the purple cloud, Lime spoke to Hibiki and Wudi who are still in silence.

The surroundings still had the remnants of Makoto's magic power.

Making a spell of that level, Makoto was able to accomplish a stunt like leaving the three unscathed when they were in the area.

Lime was proud of it, shocked, and had a strange smile.

"...Is this Lime's trump card?" (Hibiki)

With a slightly trembling voice, Hibiki finally opened her mouth.

"...Yeah. Of course, there's no problem in taking the all the credit like the time in the temple." (Lime) "You won't tell us what you did?" (Hibiki)

"I don't know." (Lime)

"Eh?" (Hibiki)

"I don't know. I just consulted. To a person that might have known of that cloud, and if that person had some sort of plan." (Lime) With a refreshed face as if an evil spirit had left his shoulders, Lime answers Hibiki.

"What in the world..." (Wudi)

"Seriously. It is shocking right? I can only laugh at it." (Lime) Those were words that were said as if affirming the Wudi.

"Kusunoha Company..." (Hibiki)

Hibiki probably already inferred a certain amount of truth.

But right now, she limited herself to only muttering these words.

To avoid saying anything imprudent and have Lime hear it.

She could also tell the change of heart in Lime instinctively.

"I have to return soon. I have a mountain of work over there." (Lime) "I see... It was fun, but too bad. When Raidou-dono comes to Limia, I would like you to come as well. It would be sad if this were the end after all." (Hibiki) "If Boss asks me to, I will. I also had fun, Hibiki." (Lime) After

that, they returned to the ground, and regrouped with Chiya and Bredda.

The hero that was requested by Lorel Union, was able to splendidly defeat the purple cloud and save the people of Lorel.

The reputation of Hibiki has increased once again.

It's a result that can be considered a success.

But a bit before regrouping, Hibiki bit her lips.

Strong.

(Lime... I...) (Hibiki)

The first person that Hibiki wished for the most, had slipped from her hands.

She understood this.

And Hibiki was trying not to show her emotions in her face, but this time she was unable to.

She was mortified, and those feelings welled up to her throat.

That she didn't say anything was maybe because of her obstinacy.

Whatever the case may be, the assistance of Lime and the competition with Makoto, had ended in the victory of Makoto without his knowledge.

Chapter 199: The Sea and Makoto are doing well

“I have been nailed down...”

The contact of Limia was as expected.

They unreservedly called me regarding the schedule.

Come as fast as possible(in the time that Senpai is at Lorel), and my thoughts were splendidly shot down.

They probably have a lot of things to prepare, so the date and times that were proposed were all reasonable.

The fastest one will probably have Senpai in Limia already.

In that case, I feel like I will have Mio stay.

Luckily, we have the sea, so she probably won't get bored. That part is a saving.

“Well, it is good that a day has been decided. It will clear one pain after all.” (Makoto) Deliberately voicing it out, I make myself think that something good has happened.

With this, the troublesome country visits will be over.

It seems like Rembrandt-san is doing his moves, so the Aion Kingdom isn't calling me.

I have interest in Lorel Union, so I actually want to visit it once.

Maybe because the Goddess is being docile, the Church seems to be docile as well.

I just have to endure a bit more.

Even so, the talk finished faster than anticipated.

The reason was because I compromised fast though.

I am slightly interested in the details of the growth of Jin's group, but returning to the Academy is just...

Yeah, let's confirm the work in Asora.

I take out the documents I wanted from the desk.

Shiki puts together the documents that I should be seeing, so it is a great help.

"For now, it seems like the races that will be going to the sea have been decided." (Makoto) I turn over the documents.

This time, before having an interview with me, I had Tomoe and the others do a trial and have them do a survival for a set period of time.

It may sound excessive when calling it survival, but the point is, it is just to try living there.

Even if I say sea, the environment is varied, and we will test if the various races are actually able to live in the sea of Asora.

Tomoe is the one in charge of this trial and she is also the advisor.

So long as there's no excessive actions in the period of time she is in charge, she doesn't need to show herself.

"It would be ideal if there are races that can accommodate in land as well though." (Makoto) As expected, things won't go so smoothly.

The large sized aquatic demonic beasts are far from being able to relate to land.

And the mermaids are fish at their lower half.

Even if they are hyuman-like, it is obvious at a glance that even trying to walk would be a difficulty.

In terms of race, the Lorelei that seem to be a variety of demons have hyuman shaped bodies, so instead of in the sea, they live close to the sea, which makes them able to adapt easily to land.

The reversed race that has hyuman limbs and fish body are able to run in land as well.

Because of that, the name of the race is Neptune Sea Lord. I feel like their very existence is a joke already.

There's also a race called Sahuagin that is half human-like, and even when it is not their specialty, they are able to move in land.

About them, what left the most impression was actually the plate that was shining at their head.

I thought they were kappa. Sea kappas.

And so, While having the races that can go in both land and water at the port, it would be ideal if they were to interact with the other races that are only able to live in the sea.

I thought that it would be nice if that port and my house were to interact with a certain town.

And so, I left the detailed parts to Tomoe and the others.

"Mermaids, Lorelei, Sahuagin, and Neptunes. Sea horses, Kelpie, Sea Serpents, Blue Moons..." (Makoto) When I confirm them in order, I could tell that there were quite a lot.

There are more than 10 races.

It is not like they are competing for a spot in the migration, so as long as they are able to adapt to the sea of Asora, I don't mind having them all migrate.

And as long as there's no clear hostility between the races.

The sea is vast, so they are able to find a place to live anywhere.

If they are preyed upon, or are about to become prey by the living beings that were originally in that sea, I can just have them retire.

Will I have to do an interview with all the races, or are all the races going to retire?

...No, the latter would be problematic, so I want them to do their best.



A pleasant report came in.

Almost all the races that are trying to live in the sea are able to adapt to the lifestyle of Asora.

There were about two races that retired because they felt danger towards the sharks and giant octopuses that were originally there, but it seems like most of the races are able to safely live.

At this rate, we will be able to obtain residents for both the cold sea and the warm sea.

Asora has a lot of land compared to the population.

This also applies to the sea, so if they live in a lot of places and gather information, there's nothing I would be more grateful for.

It would be incredibly troublesome if we were to investigate every nook and cranny by ourselves after all.

"And well, it seems like all in all, there's no problem. There's also people that are beginning to communicate with the pre-existing living beings there. The fear we had about quarrels between races has not occurred."

With no real problem, Tomoe finishes her report.

"That's great. It is regrettable for the races that retired, but tell them that if there's a time when they need the Kuzunoha Company, we will cooperate." (Makoto) "I have already told them. If a problem were to occur at human territory, we will hear them out." (Tomoe) "As expected. Is Sari doing well?" (Makoto)

"Because it is her first job, she is full of vigor. There's no strange movements." (Tomoe) "I see." (Makoto)

A few days have passed since my lecture at the Academy.

The migration test in Asora has been progressing smoothly.

It is peaceful like the calm of the sea.

"By the way Waka, I heard from Shiki that the students of Rotsgard have grown quite a lot." (Tomoe) "Hm, ah yeah. It is impressive. Every single one of them have become great. It feels like it would be overdoing it if we were to train them as we first planned, so...I think that it would be okay to let them be on the teaching side." (Makoto) "The teaching side, is it? They will probably come pestering that they want to become even stronger

though.” (Tomoe) “There’s growth in teaching as well. Also, even if they want to become stronger, they are already the strongest in the Academy, you know? If we are talking about the same year, they are easily the strongest. There’s no need to train them more than this and increase the difference, right? I think that they will be able to contribute plenty enough in a war between humans, or against most of any fight against other races.” (Makoto “...I see. I am slightly interested, so do you mind if I have Shiki show me the information later?” (Tomoe) “Of course it is fine. Just don’t go doing any weird interference with the students, okay? Because you trained Misura, he has learned some weird power after all.” (Makoto) “I will be careful.” (Tomoe)

Seriously.

Tomoe training Misura became the trigger, and Jin and the others have grown an incredible lot.

Every one of them learned a special ability fit for them, and made their own trait more prominent, and the result was that they have gotten stronger.

When they were in Rotsgard Academy, they were originally kids with talent.

When someone aims high, in a sense, it is normal for them to grow.

When thinking that way, Shiki and I only helped out in it.

I will only have the new students increase their levels to where Jin’s group is, and after, I will just let them grow up on their own and they will most likely become plenty strong.

As a teacher, I have found a standard of how strong I will train my students and am doing well.

Truly good.

“Then Tomoe, do you have time now?” (Makoto)

“Again? I have to look after the races that want to migrate, so I think that it would be hard to accompany you today.” (Tomoe) “...I see.”

(Makoto)

Too bad.

“Reproducing the environment of Waka’s world tired me a lot after all. The next time I am available would be the day before Waka leaves for Limia. Sorry.” (Tomoe) “Understood. I know that I am asking for too much when you are busy after all. It is fine.” (Makoto) “...Ah, Waka, do you have time?” (Tomoe)

Tomoe?

Tomoe suddenly makes a bitter face as she asks me.

Ah, thought transmission huh.

I want to learn how to skillfully utilize thought transmission while speaking as well.

It is hard to concentrate in both of them.

If I am able to do something about it by practicing, I should try.

“What? Is it thought transmission?” (Makoto)

“Yes, it was from Lime.” (Tomoe)

“Heh~, he was together with Senpai and her group, right? What did he say?” (Makoto) “...Yeah, it wasn’t anything big. It seems like that purple cloud didn’t disappear completely with what we did the other day.”

(Tomoe) “...As I thought. I felt like the resistance was way too thin. It hasn’t been that long since then. Is it already doing evil?” (Makoto) “Yes. And it seems that Lime and Hibiki are currently dealing with it, but it seems like it is not going well.” (Tomoe) “Even Hibiki-senpai?” (Makoto)

“Seems so.” (Tomoe)

I can’t believe it.

Even though it is Hibiki-senpai.

Even though she should be able to do something about an opponent of that level.

Is it because her methods of long ranged attacks are low?

She does use a sword after all.

“I said that I would be helping Lorel, and yet, it was so half-baked. That’s not cool. Troubling Senpai would be bad, so I will do something about it.” (Makoto) “...Can I leave it to you?” (Tomoe)

“Yeah. Just that, I think it will be useless to deal with that group with the previous method. The response was thin after all. I do have something in mind, but I have to get relatively close or I feel like it won’t work.” (Makoto) I would like to at least get an approximate location of it.

“Then how about using the strategy that the winged-kin utilized in last time’s mock battle with Waka? The one about sharing information with a third party from a faraway location.” (Tomoe) “Ah, I see. It will definitely be useful. Let’s go with that. Then I will have to move to a location where I can aim.” (Makoto) “There’s a mountain with good view. It has a bit of distance from the location, but if it’s Waka, there shouldn’t be any problems, right?” (Tomoe) “I do have Azusa and magic after all. I actually don’t have to worry about range.” (Makoto) “Well then, go ahead. I will send the winged-kin there, so while confirming with the information share, try to tackle it.” (Tomoe) “Understood.” (Makoto)

“Waka.” (Tomoe)

“What?” (Makoto)

“Lime and the hero are floating close to that area, so I don’t mind if you gift them a few shots, you know? Especially to Lime.” (Tomoe) “Why do I have to do something like that to Lime?” (Makoto) Calling me to a stop when I was about to enter the created gate with Azusa in one hand, she said something strange.

“...That’s because he has slacking slightly you see, so I thought that it would help for discipline.” (Tomoe) “You say some scary things.” (Makoto)

“It could serve as good motivation to Hibiki, you know?” (Tomoe) “I don’t want to. If it gets discovered later, just how do you think we would be able to apologize? Seriously.” (Makoto) “...Have a safe trip.” (Tomoe)

“Yeah, I will return soon.” (Makoto)

The other side of the gate was as stated, the summit of a mountain.

Truly a panorama of 360° degrees.

What a superb view.

And in the faraway sky, there's one clearly visible thing.

I could tell that that purple stain was the problematic cloud.

“It has become quite big. It is not as big as before though.” (Makoto) I prepare my bow.

I set an arrow.

The target cloud is quite a distance away, but maybe because I am using magic simultaneously since coming to this world, I don't feel like I will miss.

I have stopped worrying about whether it will reach or not.

If I can see it, I can hit it.

I am beginning to naturally think in this way.

Just that, in the case of that cloud, it is a united form of many individuals, so I feel like I can't consider it as just a single enemy.

It is something that I felt after reflecting on last time though.

“Now then, the link with the winged-kin...” (Makoto)

While I wait for the arrival of the winged-kin, I could tell that they appeared at a place a bit further away from the purple cloud.

Two huh.

A thought transmission soon came from them, and asked for confirmation if it's okay to send information.

Of course, I said okay.

After finishing a short thought transmission and waiting for a bit, a strange scenery as if looking at the purple cloud from a closer place appeared in my mind.

What was in my eyes was the cloud far in the distance, and the gap between distances made me feel slightly nauseated.

It was as if looking at it from afar, and at the same time, looking at it from a monitor.

But if I get used to it, it might be convenient.

Thanks to it, I was able to clearly tell where Hibiki-senpai, her comrade magician, and Lime were floating.

‘I will give you the coordinates’, is the follow-up report that came from the winged-kin.

The scenery of where the cloud and Senpai’s group were, was shown to me like a grid, and several numbers appeared.

Hmph~.

So this is how the winged-kin exchange information with each other and getting their aim huh.

It is certainly easy to understand.

It is not that necessary for me who snipes by relying on my senses, but I think that it is an advantage to erase the measurement errors in the attack.

I give my thanks to the winged-kin and tell them to be in standby.

“I will pierce that purple cloud in my sight. At that scenery that’s in my mind, I only pierce the cloud.” (Makoto) It was a mysterious feeling.

It was the same sensation as aiming straight.

But at the same time, it was as if I was placing my aim at the scenery in the monitor.

In my time at Japan, this would be an incredible stunt, and yet, I was able to lock the target.

No, not yet.

It is no good to just avoid Senpai’s group.

And it is also no good to just pierce through the part that seems to be the cloud's core.

More, more, more, more...

Concentrating in each live that comprises the cloud, I target everything of it, all the links.

Not shooting vaguely.

And for that sake...

“...”

While maintaining my concentrated state, I lower the arrow I set up.

This time, I won't use this one.

What I need right now is not an arrow, but a catalyst for my spell.

To pierce through several targets at once, I need both archery and magic.

From the variety of arrows that I had the Eldwas make, I choose an arrow that has the most ability to inject magic power in, and once again, I set it up.

An amber colored arrow.

“Avoiding Senpai's group, I will pierce the core, and kill all the clouds in a chain.” (Makoto) The cloud that appears in my mind is being filled with countless numbers of aims.

I can do it.

I silently release my arrow.

For a while, the arrow continued on as a normal arrow, but the amber arrow soon broke, and in exchange, it turned into a big mass of light that could take up the whole field of vision, and flew towards the purple cloud.

And then, after a while, the mass of light bursts.

Okay, I did it!

Avoiding Senpai's group, it pierces through the core of the cloud, and at the same time, it pierced through the scattered portions that I placed my

aim on. I could tell that it was effective.

I have killed it.

Different from last time, this time I actually felt it.

“Fuh~, I have defeated it.” (Makoto)

It seems like the winged-kin have witnessed it as well.

They face this way and are flying here.

Even though one is carrying the other, they are incredibly fast.

Thanks to their help, my possibilities with the arrow increased more.

I am happy.

I felt like I once again confirmed that the bow is something irreplaceable for me.

Chapter 200: A Makoto-like Asora diplomacy

At a place not that far away from the land of Asora, an extensive forest spreads.

I ordered them not to claim the territory.

And I also ordered them that they shouldn't enter it recklessly.

This is not the only forest.

If you want to receive the grace of a forest, it is fine to just step into a different forest. There wasn't any objection to that and was accepted.

Why did I do that?

It is because of the animals that use that forest as their territory.

Wolves.

Animals that are said to already be extinct in Japan.

The way they are viewed is different depending on the country, but in Japan, wolves are seen as prideful and intelligent animals, and were treated as the guardians of the forest.

Or at least that's how I think.

For me, the Japanese wolves were animals that made me feel holiness in them.

And to think that I would be able to see them in a parallel world, or more like a parallel world of that parallel world. I was happy.

That's why, by complete whim, I accepted their existence.

I didn't want to take a measure like hunting them down just because they are an hindrance.

And, I am currently in that forest.

In both of my hands I have things like fruits, grains, and all sorts of big plates.

“I am here.” (Makoto)

After a while of walking through a path that would be fitting to call the path of the beast, a simple altar made of stones was in sight.

Leaving the big plates at the altar, I sit at a side of it and look up.

“So thick. The green is thick. The salty wind is not bad, but this calms me down more.” (Makoto) Breathing deeply was really comfortable.

“It is rare for you to come on your own.”

“It is fine from time to time.” (Makoto)

A breathing reached my ears, and yet, his words were clearly relayed to me.

I have already gotten used to it, but it is an interesting sensation.

“Friendship huh. Well, that’s fine, Misumi. I have smelled an unusual scent from afar. Do you know something about that?”

“A God acquaintance did something a bit unreasonable you see. So a sea was made.” (Makoto) “Sea?”

It seems like it was the first time the wolf heard of that word, he tilted his head.

I can feel the presence of several wolves in the area.

Looks like they are distancing themselves from the boss, and are at a set distance without getting closer than that.

“It is like a salt water lake that’s a lot bigger than this forest.” (Makoto)
“...Fumu. It is hard to believe, but if Misumi says so, that must be the case. Is it okay to think that it won’t affect our living?”

“Yeah. It is quite far after all. Actually, just what kind of nose you have there? Being able to smell it from here.” (Makoto) “I was able to smell it from the plates and fruits that you are carrying there as well, you know? People are truly unhandy living beings huh.”

“Ahahaha, for a wolf, that might be the case. And so, about that proof of friendship, there’s a slightly different meaning to it as well.” (Makoto) “...

Are you talking about those weird flying insects?”

“...Right. Sorry, it seems like they caused you trouble.” (Makoto) I don’t know what kind of fight the wolves had with the Al-Elmiera, but there’s no doubt that they suddenly came barging in.

20% was to apologize, and the other 80% was because I wanted to meet the wolves after a while, and that’s why I came with cuts of fruits.

“No need to apologize. If it’s something of that level, we don’t mind. It is like having wasps getting slightly stronger.”

When hearing about wasps, I instinctively feel fear.

Its name is a representation of fear.

When looking at the Al-Elmiera like that, they feel scarier.

“Is there anyone that got hurt?” (Makoto)

“None. But it is true that a slight problem has occurred.”

“I’m listening.” (Makoto)

“Before that, let me confirm this. Those guys won’t be coming here anymore?”

“They won’t. They have faced quite the scary experience, so they are completely scared of this forest.” (Makoto) To the point that they are truly pitiful.

“I see. Actually...”

“Yeah?” (Makoto)

“Those guys, taste good.”

Hm?

“ ... ”

“Like concentrated honey. A dense sweetness. It is quite...a delicacy.”

“ ... ”

“In the past, we said that we won’t cause any harm to Misumi’s people. If those flying insects are the same as well, it is regrettable. That’s the

problem.”

“They taste good?” (Makoto)

“Yeah. It is a lot more appealing than attacking a beehive.”

The wolf says this with a straight face.

I don't think he is being serious, but the saliva that's dripping from his mouth is real.

“Sorry, I want you to endure.” (Makoto)

“Can't be helped. Misumi should be able to slaughter us all, and yet, asked to coexist. That debt is big. We will obey.”

“Thanks. I will be bringing the same that's on the plate there, so eat it with everyone. I hope there's something you like there.” (Makoto) “We have plenty of grace from the forest. There's no reason for Misumi to treat us well. I said this in the beginning but, there's no need for you to give us anything, you know?”

“...Isn't it fine? Let's just leave it as coexisting by mingling from time to time like this.” (Makoto) I am happy by the simple fact that they are here, is something I can't say.

I feel like they would treat me like a weirdo.

...Maybe I am already being treated that way.

“What a strange man. Well, it is not as big as a thanks, but our side will tell the bears not to eat the flying insects.”

“...Bears. It is certainly true that they have the image of liking sweet things more than you guys.” (Makoto) Or more like, it is their total favorite.

Honey Bear-san.

The combination is scarily fitting.

“They haven't eaten the flying insects, so there shouldn't be any problem. But if it's after eating them, they probably would have gone on a rampage. But Misumi, we are living without involving ourselves with the

people in the sky. That part of the talk, you will have to say it yourself.”

“Ah~, yeah, I understand. Thanks.” (Makoto)

I see.

There’s the chance that the Al-Elmeras might be eaten by bird of prey
huh.

I feel like it won’t work if I just tell them not to go to the mountains.

It won’t be such a pain if I just teleport there, so let’s finish it now.

Even if I say that I will be going to talk with them, we are in Asora, so it
should be fine to take it easy.



A precipitous mountain.

At the ridges that are rising perpendicularly, there’s gorges that have
green spreading.

It is a place that would be impossible to reach without having wings.

Or a body power like that of a serow.

Well, if I teleport there, it isn’t that much of a pain.

Different from walking in the forest, it would be tiresome to suddenly
climb mountains.

“Ah, there he is.” (Makoto)

At a part of the hill, he was there.

A blue mass that one would have to look up like the Buddha-sama statue
in Nara. <The statue’s shoulders are 28 meters across and its height is
14.98m.> He looks like that even when he has his wings folded.

Crazy big would be exactly this.

As I get closer, I can tell that that lump is actually a bird with its wings
folded.

He is the King of the birds in Asora.

It is not a falcon or an eagle.

It seems like it is a bird called Roc.

<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roc_\(mythology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roc_(mythology))> He is rarer than wolves, or more like, I feel like it is a mythical beast though. Its existence has such a sense of unrealism that it makes me feel like the wolves are amazing.

Because you know, at this point, it is already a mamono.

“The King huh, it’s been a while.”

“Long time no see. I am not used to that way of calling me though.”
(Makoto) He calls me King.

But I just don’t feel it.

I feel like calling me landlord-san or something like that fits more.

“I am surprised you have come here from such a long distance. It seems like you are doing well with the winged-kins but, is it a different business?”

He cleanly ignores it.

“Kinda. I have a request regarding the new race living here.” (Makoto)
“Ah, the one about a lot of races making a racket in the lake of crazy size, is it about that?”

“No, that’s another matter. About the sea, if there’s birds that can live there, it is fine to let them.” (Makoto) “Hoh~, that lake is called sea huh. It is truly big. I could feel a diverse amount of lives as well.”

“You must have. Right now the people that want to live there are in the middle of a test. They will be living at the beach or in the sea, so I don’t think they will clash with the living beings in the sky.” (Makoto) It seems like the Roc bird has gone to see the sea as well.

I am surprised that he and the wolves are able to sense the happenings of something so far away.

“I will tell the others about it.”

“And so, today’s request is about a fairy race called Al-Elemara.”

(Makoto) "...It is a name I don't know of. If it's people that live in the sky, I will look after them though."

"No, I think they are closer to insects that live in the mountains or the rivers. I am not that well informed in that aspect either though." (Makoto)
"...Is it fine to just tell them not to eat those guys?"

"You get it fast. They have wings and fly in the sky, but their looks are like that of small people, so it would be a big help not to eat them."
(Makoto) "Understood. If it's people of the King, I will have them be careful of not hunting them."

"I am sorry for bothering you while you were resting. Then, later."
(Makoto) "If you have any errand, you can tell us. I don't mind if you call me."

"Yeah, I won't hesitate in coming here." (Makoto)

"Say my regards to the new people of the King."

With this, the matter of the Al-Elmerra should be okay.

Now then, after looking at the situation at the sea, I will show my face at the store.



Heh~ the Lorelei are building the port town and living at the seashore huh.

It did say in the documents that they originally lived at the reefs, but maybe Sari suggested it, or it might be because they wanted a better environment and are building the town.

The beach is wide, and from what I have seen, the waves are calm.

It is like the sea in a resort.

I think it is a good place.

"Waka-sama."

Ah, it is Sari.

"It looks like you are doing your best in the job." (Makoto) "It is the first

job Waka-sama has given me after all.” (Sari) “Right now you are working as the advisor of the Lorelei?” (Makoto) “Yes. But even if I say this, I feel like there won’t be any problems occurring and the test time will end just like this though.” (Sari) “Isn’t that good? And so, after the Lorelei tried living here, did they think about staying?” (Makoto) This is a part that I am interested in.

“Of course. It seems like a relationship with the other races is beginning to form, so it looks good.” (Sari) “With the other races? That’s pretty progressive. Can you tell me the details?” (Makoto) I heard a dadada sound of something running at fast speed.

I reflexively look at the direction of the sound.

Tunaman was running.

At a full sprint reminiscent of athletes.

It looked like it had a really thin box, but its contents are unknown.

“The interaction with the Neptune Sea Lord is prosperous.” (Sari) “Ah, I see.” (Makoto)

I heard that tunas are incredibly fast in the sea, but it seems like they are fast in land too.

They are not using their fins, but their two strong pair of feet that I don’t know where they grew from though.

Ah, it jumped into the sea just like that.

What a terrific ability in both land and water.

“They are a race that doesn’t lose to that exaggerated name. The hikyaku tuna-san that was running just now is counted as well, but it seems like the herculean strength Red King Crab-san –of the same race– is able to break giant rocks and adjust the currents, you know? I also didn’t know of that race. The world is really wide.” (Sari) A hikyaku tuna-san, and a herculean strength Red King Crab-san?

A courier of ancient japan huh.

I can understand that couriers are powerful.

...

Like hell that's the case.

First of all, it is strange that a tuna that feels like it would be able to participate in the triathlon and a Red King Crab that probably looks like a crab, are of the same race.

It is strange, right?

Isn't it strange?

"I feel like putting it as 'the world is wide' isn't enough of an explanation." (Makoto) "It seems like they are mingling with other races aside from the Lorelei. I think they will become the key race of the sea." (Sari) Sari was evaluating them with feelings of respect.

I don't know if she is just pure or deviated.

In my case, how to say it...I am interested in the Neptunes in a different sense.

That they are social is pleasant, or how to say it, mysterious.

Even if I didn't have plans on meeting her, I was able to see the state of Sari.

I would be happy if she were to find a way of life here in Asora.

Whether it is the forest, mountains, or the sea.

In the end, this was a tour through the Asora nature, but this way of passing time is not bad.

I returned to my house, and while preparing for my trip to Rotsgard, I felt somewhat refreshed.

Chapter 201: Makoto, Shiki, and the silver tea

“Haaah!! I can’t anymore, I can’t move, I won’t move.”

With rough breathing, I fall onto the meadows.

A nostalgic exhaustion that envelops my whole body.

This sensation that I always tasted in my time at Japan.

This is it.

As I thought, I can’t live without this.

“Waka, is it okay already?”

“...Thanks, Tomoe.” (Makoto)

“Then...Fuh~~” (Tomoe)

Tomoe changes her posture of being cross-legged to falling face forward onto the ground.

At the same time, I felt like the burden in my body disappeared, and my body turned light.

...I know I am asking for something unreasonable, but I just can’t go without this.

It is a pain to even speak. Tomoe and I spend a while silent within this dusk.

My previous world, Japan; reproducing that environment.

In the past, the reproduction time was short and it wasn’t fit to be used as training, but with the expertise of Tomoe, the time has been steadily increasing, and I am now able to maintain it for around 6 hours.

Since then, I have been having her accompany me in my bow training at the times when she is able to, and so, that brings us to our current state.

By the way, today was around 10 hours.

The reason why it was longer than the limit time of Tomoe was because

I did the transference of magic power that I did at the demon race country with Mio and Shiki, on Tomoe.

Now that I think about it, when I tried transferring more than that time, Tomoe showed a change in her outward appearance like with the two.

Specifically speaking, her hair color changed to silver.

When I tried doing it, she was happy that she would finally be able to have black hair like how Mio and Shiki told, but...when she looked at her own face with the mirror she had prepared, her expression was kinda...worth watching.

Well you see, she was grieving grandly, asking why she was the only one that was getting further away from being Japanese.

At that night, it was the first time I saw the bad alcoholic Tomoe.

“As I thought, this is it. It is hard to breathe, and my body can’t move, as if it isn’t mine anymore. My whole body is numb in pain and going crazy.” (Makoto) The peak of exhaustion had passed and I was now able to manage some surplus.

As the environment returned, my recovery seems to fasten as well.

I wanted to taste it for a bit more though.

I really like training until the limit of my body, and falling to the side in my tired state.

Since coming to this parallel world, no matter how much time I trained, I couldn’t taste this sensation.

Inside of me, I was incredibly uneasy.

I was thinking that maybe my body and techniques were slowly declining.

For someone that had grown used to bullying my body, I felt like I was slowly doing steps back every day, and was scared beyond belief.

I am normally not able to act in this way though.

Looking at Jin’s group who usually end up that way in their lectures, I

was actually jealous.

“My body is incredibly heavy in a different meaning though. I intended to leave this type of job to Shiki, seriously...” (Tomoe) Tomoe who had used quite the amount of magic power, turned her face towards me without wiping her sweat and muttered.

For Tomoe, it is just extremely tiring, and she isn't accompanying me because she likes it.

I held back and said that at least once a week, and yet, she was taken aback by the amount.

At the numerous amount.

Even though I would like it to be daily.

In the end, we reached a compromise and had it changed to once every ten days.

Other times it would depend on the convenience of Tomoe.

“I can only ask Tomoe of this. I am counting on you from now on as well.” (Makoto) “This training...for how long are you planning on continuing it?” (Tomoe) “For how long?” (Makoto)

I don't understand what Tomoe meant with that and ask back.

“I will repeat what I said. Increasing physical strength, repeating concentration, and shooting the bow earnestly. What technique are you aiming to obtain, and at what time do you estimate that you will be getting it? I was seriously thinking of this.” (Tomoe) “I don't have something like that, you know?” (Makoto) Training my muscles, repetitions of my posture, shooting at the target; it is something I do to be more in tune with my bow anyways, so there's no end to it.

I will continue it for the rest of my life.

“...There's none?” (Tomoe)

“None.” (Makoto)

“Then, you are telling me that what you are doing to the point of

exhaustion is simply a repetition?" (Tomoe) "It is not simple repetition you know. I am slowly moving forward. Probably." (Makoto) "Probably?!" (Tomoe)

"Yup." (Makoto)

Tomoe's face stiffens.

I see. Tomoe is continuously training in the basics, but that's with the aim of learning techniques and improving herself.

Then she probably won't understand.

But I think that Tomoe will someday definitely understand it.

If she truly loves the sword.

Just like how I am doing this because of my love for the bow.

"A-Are you saying that you are self-aware that you are moving forward, and yet, you don't have an objective?" (Tomoe) "Because you know, even in my predecessors, I think no one has seen that summit. I probably won't be able to see it myself either. But that's not a problem." (Makoto) "I think I kind of understand how I was blown away by Waka in just a few days after you came to this world. Kinda." (Tomoe) "Is that so." (Makoto)

I move my body that still has exhaustion remaining and stand up.

Yeah.

With only bow and training, it hasn't changed that this is my core in Japan and here as well.

I really have to be grateful of Tomoe.

"If you are going to return, please go ahead first. I don't think I will be able to move for a while." (Tomoe) Tomoe who had her blue hair back, caught on my movements.

"No, I will wait, so let's return together. I will be putting the arrows in order and doing maintenance to the tools." (Makoto) "..."

By the time I finish tidying up, Tomoe had recovered to the point that she could stand up herself.

It seems like the person herself used a magic of some sort though.

I told her that it wouldn't even amount to trouble in nursing her, but it seems like that part has something to do with Tomoe's pride.

Well, it is good that she is reliable.

When we return to our house, the meal that Mio did her best to make will be waiting for us.

I am probably quite blessed.

I am blessed with my surroundings, and I am being fulfilled by it after all.



Finishing dinner, I return to the workroom with Shiki.

What's dangling even from the chairs, are the documents about the students.

Not about the new kids that want to attend the lectures, but about Jin's group.

"Go ahead."

"Thanks, Shiki." (Makoto)

Shiki brought tea.

Hm? This is tea, right?

It is milk tea huh.

Just in case, I lightly stir the spoon and see.

Good, it mixes.

It seems like it is not something like fresh cream blended with black tea.

It gave out quite the sweet smell, so I was a bit wary.

"Don't mind it. Today I tried making something by imitating Waka-sama's world." (Shiki) "My world? Heh~." (Makoto)

There's actual milk tea in this world.

Even if you don't imitate it, I think that it's the same.

I am on the side that won't mind as long as the tea is drinkable, so the most difference I can tell is if it's mixed with milk, or if the milk is simply placed in the tea.

So I will be able to tell once I drink it huh.

It doesn't seem to be such an extreme drink, so I am relieved.

“ ... ”

Seriously?

This is incredibly sweet.

This sweetness...honey?

...Don't tell me, it is not the Al-Elmiera, right?

Also, this...instead of saying that there's milk in it, the taste of the milk is way too strong.

Instead of milk tea, it is more like, tea au lait.

Hmm, it is a mysterious drink.

There's probably gonna be days I am tired like today where it will feel like it tastes good, but it might be a bit too sweet for me.

“It has the right amount of sweetness, so I think it will help you warm up your body.” (Shiki) “The right amount? By the way Shiki, what's this? Milk tea?” (Makoto) “If I remember correctly, it is silver tea. Don't you know of it?” (Shiki) “I don't remember drinking it, and I don't know the name either. Just when did I learn of something like that?” (Makoto) It is black tea, so it shouldn't be from Japan.

In that case...maybe it came from some travelling program that I saw at who knows what day.

If that's the case, it would be hard to remember.

Silver tea huh.

“Silver tea is a black tea that's made from slight amounts of black tea,

milk, and honey.” (Shiki) He said slight amount of black tea.

In terms of classification, this is black tea?

I didn't think that a day would come when Shiki would teach me of food from my own world.

“I see. I will drink it slowly.” (Makoto)

Actually, will I be able to drink it all?

One cup of tea is looking like a towering mountain.

A Montblanc class one.

“There's a lot more, so please tell me without any reservation.” (Shiki)
Shiki, who was already in his second serve, smilingly told me this.

I probably won't be taking seconds.

“Hm, and so, about the abilities of Jin's group...” (Makoto) “After seeing them, what did you think?” (Shiki)

“...They were impressive. How to say it, they grew up too much. I feel like they have exceeded the growth we anticipated by way too much.”

(Makoto) “They do. If they grow one step higher, even if it is impossible one vs one, if they were to fight all at once, they would be able to pull a good fight against Lime.” (Shiki) “That's way too much.” (Makoto)

“...”

“Seriously. I have underestimated the talent and eliteness of those kids. I want to properly convince them and have them maintain their roles of teaching.” (Makoto) “...Waka-sama, about that, how about we have them join Kuzunoha Company?” (Shiki) Shiki returned my words with a proposal.

Is he talking about hiring them?

Even now, Jin and Amelia are doing part-time jobs, and their work is not that bad, so it shouldn't be impossible.

We say that we don't discriminate towards demi-humans, and yet, we haven't hired any humans, which feels like discrimination to humans.

Yeah...

“You mean hiring them, right?” (Makoto)

“Yes.” (Shiki)

“Before the lecture, you were in favor of taking distance from them little by little though. Why now?” (Makoto) “It is also in those documents; their growth and abilities. Honestly speaking, they are incredibly appealing test subjects. It might be hard to have them in Asora, but I have begun thinking that I want to have them work in the company and observe their growth from a close distance.” (Shiki) So his interest as a researcher has appeared.

Instead of awakening as a teacher, this is more Lich-like.

Fuh~this huh.

I once again look at the documents.

The abilities of Jin’s group is written here.

It is certainly impressive.

There’s no doubt that they are showing an irregular growth.

First of all, Yuno. Without needing to say it, it is that suit.

She properly confessed that she received it from Mio.

It seems like she has gotten accustomed to it so much, that she insisted strongly in having her use it.

I do think that it suits the fighting style of Yuno.

If she doesn’t know the meaning of the name she has to shout, there’s no real embarrassment in it, and after having her show us its specs, it was quite different from the one I used and its power was also lowered.

It is a troubling issue.

For some reason, there’s also the signature and petition of Rembrandt-san in the corner of the documents.

Seriously, what an aggressive one.

The next one is Sif and Amelia.

They are not fusing several spells by themselves; they have learned to utilize it with other people and reduce the burden in it.

In the future, no matter what country they go to, this technique will be able to increase the magic of the country.

Those two are accurately heading to a direction in magic, and growing.

But in terms of the bow of Amelia, it hasn't changed much.

It seems like she hasn't showed any result aside from increasing her own physical strength.

And so, the boys.

Izumo was arranging the arias.

Let's call it an irregular reutilization.

He was originally able to divide several arias and combine them to activate it, but at the lecture, he was able to use the arias that were already utilized and were supposed to have disappeared, into the aria of the next spell, something that I find hard to understand.

Shiki said that it is a personal talent of his.

There's no doubt that he has an interest in it.

Daena had an ultimate technique-like trump card of increasing his physical strength explosively from the very beginning.

He called it Second Stage.

The effective time is not that long, but it is also incredibly useful for short battles.

His growth was an enhancement that goes beyond it.

In the middle of the Second Stage, he is able to push it to one stage further.

The origin of that idea seems to be the instant enhancement of Jin.

It seems like it burdens the body quite a lot, but from what I see of his

body build, he probably knew that from the very beginning. I could tell that he is properly training his body.

The main dish is those two.

The first is Misura.

Before the Academy festival, he had a trump card of numbing his own sense of pain to aim for a simultaneous strike.

Thinking about his own safety, I obviously had it sealed away though.

While he was being played by Tomoe, Misura had pleasantly evolved that power of his.

Shiki named it 'Damage Delay'.

Just like its name states, it delays the damage.

It seems that as long as it is not instant death, he is able to utilize it.

I say 'it seems', because since learning this skill, he hasn't received an attack that would bring instant death yet.

Well, that's obvious huh.

He would suffer the damage later, so at a glance, it looks like there's no point in it.

But the incredible part of this skill is yet to come.

For around 30 minutes, the damage can come, but at that time, he is able to receive healing magic.

He is able to heal the stacked damage with magic.

If the healing makes it in time, obviously, nothing will happen after the 30 minutes.

It is an abnormal power.

In terms of talent, that's all.

Without a doubt, it is a skill that not even ten thousand of people would be able to replicate.

Shiki had a similar opinion to mine.

Of course, Shiki was quite interested in Misura's ability as well.

And so, the last one is Jin.

It seems like that guy has noticed a part of my [Sakai].

And he has reproduced it.

Of course, there's no way he would be able to replicate a power that he doesn't even know properly, so it was truly an imitation, but it had a different power.

What he used in the mock battle with Ema was exactly that.

He is able to affect his surroundings and create several effects.

He has to properly understand the effects himself, and it seems like there's several limitations to it, but it is a spell that is incredibly similar to [Sakai].

Moreover, the deployment itself doesn't utilize much magic power.

At the time of adding effects, there's a fitting price for it though.

...What a scary boy.

He said that currently he is only able to increase the range of it and adjust the gravity.

It seems like he is able to increase or decrease the gravity of himself.

I wanted to ask why in the hell he is able to do something like that when he is only at the basics.

"I think they will grow into a stronger fighting force." (Makoto) "I feel the same." (Shiki)

"As they continue to grow, they will gather more attention. If we employ them, aren't the other countries going to come lure them away without any cares?" (Makoto) "No doubt that will happen." (Shiki)

"The two heroes are able to charm them or pull them in, they have that kind of power. Maybe there's going to be a situation like that." (Makoto) "The chances of it are not low, and there's also the chance other powers will come as well." (Shiki) "Even so, you want to keep an eye on them?"

(Makoto)

“...Yes. If something were to happen, I will deal with it. So if I can get your permission...” (Shiki) “Fuh~. Jin and the others have their own right to decide their future. They went through the trouble of coming to the Academy and aim for that much power, so they probably have some objective as they climb up. Kuzunoha Company is not the place that will be able to answer those desires, you know?” (Makoto) “Aren’t you belittling Jin and the others a bit too much, Waka-sama? Within them, there’s already people that wish to be employed in Kuzunoha Company, you know?” (Shiki) “Is that true?” (Makoto)

I will provide them stability, but promotions and aims for higher heights, I don’t think I will be able to provide it.

And currently, more than half of our business constitutes of trades with other races aside from the hyumans.

“It seems like when Sif and Yuno graduate, they plan on entering Rembrandt Company and transferring to our side.” (Shiki) When they come via Rembrandt-san, it is kinda...hard to refuse.

“If we employ Jin and Amelia, it seems like they don’t mind leaving the Academy.” (Shiki) That’s heavy.

“About Izumo, Misura, and Daena; they haven’t made clear their will to be employed, but it seems like they ‘definitely don’t want to be enemies of Kuzunoha Company’.” (Shiki) ...What an incredibly realistic opinion.

Employment of hyumans huh.

It is certainly true that if there’s a chance, it would be good to employ some since there’s also the eyes of the public.

Even if I won’t have them touch much of our secrets, if they were to do something...

For now, let’s just think about it positively.

“...About the employment, I will think about it. Shiki wants to employ them, right?” (Makoto) “Yes. Even if it’s to make them grow, if we are

hiring them, I will set it up so that we can erase them whenever needed. Please don't worry about that part." (Shiki) I don't know if he actually has emotions for his students or not.

I spoke with Shiki about work for a while, and we spoke about things regarding Limia as well as we pass the time.

After a pause, I bring the cup to my mouth.

It has gotten cold.

I didn't know that when it gets cold, the sweetness does a grade-up.

The exam at the sea is close to over.

The interview is also close huh.

...Sweet.

Even when I try to deviate my thoughts, as I thought, it was no good.

It will probably be impossible to share drinks with Shiki who is able to empty a pot of it.

Chapter 202: I do think it is a bit hasty though

Rotsgard, Kuzunoha Company's office room.

Today I am being at ease in this room.

But well, it is not like I am not doing work.

Right now I am in the middle of work related to the documents of the highly praised students.

Shiki said he wants to make Jin an apprentice of his as a researcher.

Jin was able to guess out my [Sakai] by instinct, and the power that he deployed –putting it in layman terms– he is able to make his opponent heavier or make himself lighter; it can be considered adjustment of gravity.

He is unable to make himself lighter and the opponent heavier at the same time, but if he is just making himself lighter, it is possible to reduce the range of the spell.

Jin is able to center the activation of the spell in a person other than himself, and opposite of being able to lighten himself, he is able to make the opponent heavier and reduce the range as well.

Excluding the activation point and the consumption of magic power, the utilization of it is truly similar to that of Sakai.

When I asked Shiki why he makes things heavier or lighter, he said that it is probably the easiest to picture in the interference with his space.

From Jin's cognisance, the power will take effect at the direction where a mass is existing and trying to move, so the power actually takes effect when the target is actually moving, so it reduces the burden and losses, is what Shiki explained to me, and I understood the outline of it while ignoring the fine details.

Shiki seemed to be having fun in a different sense from me.

It might be the difference between a normal person and a researcher.

In other words, Jin's new spell is a power that needs movement in order to increment its power.

Impressive.

I felt like I was hearing a physics lesson.

In this world that hasn't developed that study properly, just how was Jin able to reach to that idea?

Now that I think about it, he is also a member of the elites that attend the Rotsgard Academy.

And a scholarship student at that.

He must be a prodigy or a genius.

It seems like Shiki was surprised in the same point as me. He took my physics book and it seems like he understood it by instinct, he opened it in the section regarding vectors.

I...don't hate physics, but I honestly didn't like it either.

In terms of tests, it was one of the subjects that I was able to increase the grades satisfactorily.

"Jin as a researcher huh. It differs a lot from the image of a dual-wielding warrior cutting through the vanguard." (Makoto) "At that point, Jin will probably become first rate and reach a stop there. In terms of being a researcher, he will probably be able to discover one or two groundbreaking ideas. There's plenty chance he can become more than first rate." (Shiki) But only as a researcher.

How complicated.

"He will probably be bewildered. Not as a clerk or as a warrior, but a disciple to become a researcher. By the way, aren't there other kids Shiki has an eye on?" (Makoto) Like Amelia maybe.

It would be interesting if he were to say that he wants to have her dress in a wedding dress.

If it is someone like that, I wouldn't mind that person entering Asora.

Currently, the only ones that have the chance for that are Shiki and Lime after all.

"Right. I think that even without my judgment, Sif and Yuno would have been hired as employees in given time. In terms of our relationship with Rembrandt-shi." (Shiki) "...Well, that's how it is." (Makoto)

"In terms of ability, there's nothing that especially interests me, but it seems like they have quite the good will towards us, so I think that there won't be any problems in using them as employees of the company. They also declared that they will be passing the merchant guild exam by the time they graduate, so it will be easier by the time we have a branch store."

(Shiki) "So they have enough motivation huh. It seems like Rembrandt-san is also in approval of this. And, how about the others?" (Makoto)

"Others... Regarding Izumo, it seems like his true feelings are that he wants to return to his homeland Lorel, but in terms of his course, he hasn't consulted me. It seems like there's some circumstances, but he doesn't say it, so he probably has enough confidence that he can resolve it. The discord between head family and branch family is troublesome, so it would save us the pain. I think it would be better to leave it alone, and if Izumo contacts us, it would be good to take distance by limiting it to only listening to what he has to say. A magician that has no good or bad, there's no real appealing point that would make me want to hire him."

(Shiki) He isn't saying it, but hey, he is talking as if he already knew everything.

Head and branch family.

It is a talk that could happen in Japan as well.

It is true that it is not something that I would want to get involved in.

"What about Daena?" (Makoto)

"He is married, so the person himself said that he would want to be employed in the Academy. 'If you are going to fight with the Academy, tell me first, I will run away', is what he said as he laughed while being drunk. His eyes were serious though. The same as Izumo; he isn't a talent that I

would want to invite at all costs, so if he has a different path in mind, I wouldn't mind ignoring it." (Shiki) "His wife is pregnant, right?" (Makoto)

If I remember correctly, there were those kind of rumors.

The person himself hasn't said anything though.

If she has morning sickness, you can just be absent for the class and be by her side, is something I would want to tell him.

"Yeah. If Waka-sama were to hear that, you might tell him to take absence for the lectures and be together with her, so until she is stable, he wanted to have it stay as a secret at all costs, is what he requested me." (Shiki) "...He readily said that huh." (Makoto)

"The morning sickness has calmed down quite a bit already. He has come to buy medicine a few times, but lately, he hasn't done that." (Shiki) "Hmph~, are you telling me that he has been going to the Academy normally and taking classes while his wife was suffering with morning sickness?" (Makoto) Is that fine with you, husband?

And the medicine as well, if you were to say it, we could have send it to your room.

Since you are buying it at our place, we can provide at least that much service you know.

"Daena is also a special student, so I think that diligently doing his best as a special student of the Academy is actually something good though." (Shiki) "...Is that how it works? Then what about Misura and Amelia?" (Makoto) "The damage delay of Misura interests me a lot. By the time he graduates, I want to have it completely clarified. He is a favorite of Tomoe-dono, so she will probably train him until she is bored of it... If the person himself wishes it, it is possible to hire him as well." (Shiki) "Saying it like that. Is there some sort of problem?" (Makoto) I was bothered by the slight time he took to say it.

"It seems like his parents are ardent believers of the Goddess and want Misura to serve in the Church, or more like, they want him to be employed there. The person himself is troubled and holding his head because of it,

but I think that the chances that he is pushed just like that and enters the Church are high.” (Shiki) “Ardent believers of the Goddess... What withering words.” (Makoto) “His fighting style and his personality are passive, so if he has already accepted being pushed by the flow, he can just do whatever he wants.” (Shiki) “I see.” (Makoto)

“Just in case, I did tell him that there’s the chance that the Church and Kuzunoha Company will confront, so he will probably groan about this until his graduation.” (Shiki) “He would obviously be troubled.” (Makoto)

“Thinking about a future where Waka-sama is laughing loudly and pointing a finger at him, even the passive Misura that goes with the flow, will probably desperately swim against that current. His parents or Waka-sama, I think we will be able to see an interesting decision.” (Shiki) “...You are dark, Shiki.” (Makoto)

“Thanks for the compliment.” (Shiki)

“Then, what about Amelia?” (Makoto)

Since he is placing her at the end, maybe he is considering it pretty important?

Or the contrary?

“Amelia is a jack of all trades and master of none, so there’s no real appealing skill. There has been a scout coming from Gritonia Empire, and she already has the choice of entering their knight corps. She wants to be employed in our place, but there’s no merit in it, so there’s no need to.” (Shiki) A scout from Gritonia huh.

Quite the tall talk.

It seems like Limia hasn’t spoken to any specific student, so is there no candidate for Limia in the students?

If I had to choose between Gritonia or Limia, I would without a doubt choose Limia though.

Even so, that’s cold.

Amelia has been approaching Kuzunoha Company that aggressively, or

more like, approaching Shiki, and yet...

“So there’s no one thinking about going to Limia?” (Makoto) “The king has spoken to a few, but there’s no approach from Limia Kingdom, so they probably haven’t placed it in their options. Leaving aside Jin, Sif, and Yuno; I think that the other four have a chance of being invited by Limia.” (Shiki) “Daena and Misura as well?” (Makoto)

Daena’s wife is in this town, and Misura’s parents are Church lovers, right?

“If Daena were to be invited with his whole family, there’s plenty choice to go. I think that he will decide by the trouble of the moving and the treatment. About Misura, there’s the hero chosen by the Goddess in Limia, so there’s enough chance for his parents to accept.” (Shiki) Senpai huh.

It is true that if they are ardent believers of the Goddess, cooperating with the hero can enter in the choices.

It might become a fulfilling job.

I don’t understand it at all though.

“I see.” (Makoto)

Amelia, it doesn’t seem like it is working.

If I were asked if I wanted to hire her, I actually don’t care whichever it is.

“Waka-sama, are you bothered by Amelia? Is there a part in her that you are interested in?” (Shiki) So he took it in that way huh.

“Hm, no. It seems like she is um...quite attached to Shiki, and that’s why she is working part-time at our place, right? And so, I was a bit bothered by it.” (Makoto) “If it’s only that, there’s plenty other girls like that at the Academy, so in terms of wanting to embrace her, it isn’t to that degree. She is the only one that’s taking the lectures within those girls though.” (Shiki) ...Maybe I should have Shiki go to the Academy alone once and tail him for that one day.

Just how popular are you?

Be it Lime or Shiki; learn a bit from Rembrandt-san who is single minded in love with his wife.

And so, sorry Amelia.

I don't intend to get in the way of someone else's love, but I don't have any intentions of touching it either.

"But Amelia...if I remember correctly..." (Shiki)

"Yeah?" (Makoto)

Could it be, a revival route?

"She is appealing as a base for a chimera, like the ones at the hyuman base. With her compatibility to elements and her abilities, she is great all around, so...I was thinking about fulfilling the subjects I have few data about." (Shiki) "Uwaa~." (Makoto)

It probably would have been better if I didn't ask.

"I received an interesting document from Tomoe-dono, but as expected, raw experiments are important." (Shiki) "That's...too much. It would be safer to have Amelia leave to a different country as an elite huh." (Makoto) At worst, she would go to Gritonia and fall victim to Tomoki, but...it should be better than being a guinea pig for Shiki.

"I see. Well, it is still future talk anyways. They are currently gaining a higher salary than some adults, so they probably won't choose the paths they have compromised to." (Shiki) Right.

Jin and the others are receiving quite the high salary every month from the Academy.

If they were to become my employees, the salary they get would probably be lower.

Ah, Jin.

Shiki said that it would be good to hire Jin, but is the person himself intending to come to our place?

"Jin...intends to come to our place?" (Makoto)

“The person himself hasn’t thought of any other path aside from that, is what he said.” (Shiki) He is serious huh.

“His salary will decrease though.” (Makoto)

“...Jin strongly aims for higher heights, but lately, he has been showing a slight change.” (Shiki) “Hm?” (Makoto)

“Since the moment we met him, he has been dry about his sensation for loss and gains, and he had a tendency to decide in that way. And that hasn’t changed at all since now.” (Shiki) “Then why?” (Makoto)

Would he want to be employed in Kuzunoha Company?

He will definitely suffer a loss.

“Jin understands it. That there’s a lot of value in the experience that he can obtain in Kuzunoha Company. And that he won’t be able to obtain it in any other place.” (Shiki) Experience is worth.

Ah, so the loss and gain sense of his also counts that.

Then I can understand.

Something that only in that place you can do.

Things that he can learn only in that place.

...Fufu, if his loss and gain sensation are dry because of that, I am also like that.

For the first time, I felt familiarity with Jin.

“Merit huh. Leaving aside Asora, I am doing outside work as an owner of Kuzunoha Company and playing as a make-believe adventurer after all. It is not like I don’t understand him.” (Makoto) “Jin still has a lot to go before being able to reach Akua and Eris by himself, but that kid probably wants to become stronger in Kuzunoha Company.” (Shiki) “Stronger...” (Makoto)

“I don’t know why he wants to be stronger though.” (Shiki) “Shiki, that’s fine. Even if you know, don’t tell me. If Jin wants to tell me, he will do so.” (Makoto) “...Understood.” (Shiki)

I felt like he knew, like in the case of Izumo, so I stopped him.

...I see.

The students are thinking a lot.

And so, Amelia is in a pretty precarious position.

She is not totally out, so there's a chance...probably.

No matter how it rolls, I don't think I will be showing them Asora, so they are people that I don't think there's the need to be counted as a danger.

And so, about my opinion of Jin and the others, as a teacher involved with them in lectures, I think that it is fine if they just go to the paths that they have worked hard to head to.

Ah, maybe that's why I was bothered by Amelia who wanted to be hired in Kuzunoha Company.

It is sad that there's no choice but to use the state power there, but that makes me, me after all.

"Well then, Waka-sama. Before heading to Limia, let's do a little selection within these student candidates." (Shiki) "We are doing it right now? Isn't it okay to do it in Limia?" (Makoto) There's an incredible pile after all.

And it looks like the chances of reaching the summit in their level is pretty low.

"Of course, the final check will be done while heading to Limia, but there's this amount after all. We have to advance even if for a bit." (Shiki) "...Right." (Makoto)

It is not an amount that we can take, and actually, it is a bit impossible to leave in Asora.

"And so, here." (Shiki)

Shiki gave me a bundle of documents with the thickness of a tissue box.

I could feel a pressure surpassing its weight.

First, I should check these ones out huh.

Can I finish checking them all?

“And about that pile over there...” (Shiki)

“Hm?!” (Makoto)

The mountain of documents that Shiki pointed with his finger, burned in an instant.

A fire!

It will turn into a fire!

“Wa?!” (Makoto)

“The fire won’t spread, so don’t worry.” (Shiki)

“Ah, I see.” (Makoto)

“About that mountain, they are all failures. I have dealt with it with a small performance.” (Shiki) Don’t do it with such a pleasant smile.

Don’t do it so suddenly.

It will normally surprise me.

This is a closed room.

The second floor of the store.

“Then that means, from all of that, only this much is left?” (Makoto)

“Yes. There’s still a relative amount of it, but after seeing that mountain, I feel like this amount is something possible.” (Shiki) “True.” (Makoto)

I do feel that way.

Shiki magic huh.

“Seriously, just looking at that made me feel like my brain would be contaminated. It felt like a dangerous substance, and the amount was a lot as well. I don’t know what would have happened if Waka were to see it.” (Shiki) ...

Aren’t those documents about the application for my lecture?

“The documents here are not all good either, but are on an acceptable level that giving it to Waka-sama can turn into experience, so...” (Shiki) “I am already scared of even looking at it.” (Makoto) What experience?

What’s this about acceptable level?

What’s that about dangerous substance that can contaminate the brain?

“I did an all nighter death march and got kinda high, so there’s probably interesting components still remaining within those documents. Please do take them with you to Limia.” (Shiki) “T-Thank you for your hard work.” (Makoto)

So having continuous all nighters can make Shiki dangerous as well huh.

I can’t imagine it, but I should at least be prepared.

Anyways, Limia huh.

I have not decided which follower I should be taking with me.

Shiki would be fine, but he has a lot of things he has to do.

It is also a bottleneck that he is acquainted with Hibiki-senpai and her group.

“Well then, I will be checking the state of the sea.” (Shiki) “Ah, Shiki, regarding Limia.” (Makoto)

“? What is it?” (Shiki)

“Tomoe or Mio, who do you think would be better to bring?” (Makoto) “Mio-dono.” (Shiki)

Instant answer.

Or more like...

“Shiki, why are you averting your gaze?” (Makoto)

Not only that, his eyes are swimming.

Why is he showing such obvious suspicious behavior?

“As for me, I think that Mio-dono is a good choice.” (Shiki) “Shiki...” (Makoto)

Did something happen in the shadows?

He has made a complete change from before and is not looking my way at all.

“T-The sun is still high up in the sky of Asora, so I will be using a bikini and bath in the seawater that I haven’t tasted for several hundred of years!!” (Shiki) “Bikini?!” (Makoto)

Isn’t that the part where you say trunks?!

No wait.

“Please tell Mio-dono that Shiki has given his support in having her go alone with you! I will be going now!!” (Shiki) “Shiki?!” (Makoto)

Please tell her?!

That girl...Mio.

There’s also the matter with the suit, but it feels like she is plotting something.

It is surely not something that would bring me harm though.

I know that.

I know that but...

I-It makes me uneasy.

I am suddenly anxious about going to Limia.

Chapter 203: The name Neptune is not just for show

Without anything special happening, the test for the sea migrants ended.

The departure day of Limia was stretched, and the day for the interview came first, which I consider lucky.

Their side must have their own circumstances, but since it also fits with my own circumstances, there's no need to get aggravated.

And so, in a variety of meanings, we arrived at the day where I will be doing the last interview with the patriarchs of the races that will be migrating to Asora.

Different from before, I wait for the other party with time to spare, knowing that it is my own arbitrary decision.

About the data of the test, I was given the documents beforehand, so I have already read them and am totally ready now.

"Now then, let's begin."

The one at my side is Ema again.

She is truly a big help.

And so, the interview with the sea races began.

The first to come were the Sahuagins.

They have the special trait of Kappas at their head, and are half-fish.

They are able to live in both land and water, but the main place they live in is the sea.

Their houses are there as well.

From what I saw in the documents, they were truly living peacefully at the sea of Asora.

They are good at hunting, gathering, and they are also trying to do

something like animal husbandry in the sea, so my impression of them is that they are like Sea Highland Orcs.

They don't have friction with any race, and they are showing their will to migrate.

Moreover, they are cooperating with the harbour constructions, so they are exemplary people that I find no reason to refuse.

The interview with the Patriarch-san couple ended smoothly, and Ema was also smiling from beginning to end.

The interview ended in an incredibly peaceful manner.

By the way, the green scaled ones are male, and the brilliant red scaled ones are female.

The male are in charge of being warriors, and they are specialized in group fights. They said that in terms of magic related to water, it is their specialty.

In terms of fighting style, they gave me the impression of Mist Lizards.

Well, whatever the case, it is a good start.

"Next is..." (Makoto)

"The mermaids." (Ema)

"...How are they going to come here?" (Makoto)

Their lower half is completely fish though.

We are doing the interview in land.

The races that can't come to land are interviewed later, and the meeting place is also at a different area.

"It seems like they are using a medicine that comes with a cost, and are able to temporarily turn human shaped. That's why it seems like there's no need for our assistance this time." (Ema) "What's with that sad story-like feeling?" (Makoto)

Will it take away their voice or turn their body into foam?

I can't laugh at that.

More like, I would prefer to go to the sea.

"Ehm, the price seems to be random, but it seems like it isn't that big of a deal, and the heaviest price is a slight fever." (Ema) "...If I remember correctly, they didn't call it an elixir right? For some reason, I feel kind of betrayed though." (Makoto) Even so, it is a medicine that's sold at the market? Is what I wanted to retort.

"Waka-sama, is it okay to call the next people?" (Ema)

"Ah, yeah. It is fine." (Makoto)

"Then, I will call them." (Ema)

Well, the mermaids didn't give a good first impression, but in terms of personality, they didn't have any problem at all.

Or more like, they hated combat so much that they accepted the invitation to Asora. That's how pacifist they were.

The fishing grounds of the humans has been increasing lately, and they didn't want any friction with the races, so they were thinking about a place to move it seems.

There's reports that they are exemplar magic users, and they mainly utilize healing, but it was a race that deserved a special mention.

Also, they like public entertainment and the people themselves like to sing.

Because of that, they get along well with the Sirens and Lorelei.

They can adapt to land without the need of using medicine, but their natural residence is in the sea.

The race has a village, and it seems like they want to extent the present condition. Of course, it was an okay.

They take the interaction with other races positively, and they have promised to cooperate with the harbour town.

Ema also spoke, and in the end, they nodded satisfied at my gaze of

confirmation.

“To think that they will be inviting us to a singing show, how pleasant.”
(Ema) “Right. Since we have the chance, how about having a bi~g party at the seashore?” (Makoto) “To celebrate the meeting of new comrades huh. I think that’s a great idea. I will plan it promptly, okay?” (Ema) “I am counting on you.” (Makoto)

Oh, the one that made its appearance after my talk with Ema was...a mountain.

The knolls of Marine Blue.

This interview is done at the seashore.

It is a quite big building in the form of a gymnasium that I said will be used as a meeting place.

Just that, the entrance is gigantic.

The door opens responding to the size of the people that open it. It is a gimmick that the Eldwas are proud of.

When people of normal size like us open the door, it will act like a fake big door, but when a big living being pushes it, one will be able to tell it wasn’t actually a picture on the wall.

The light pushes in at once, and a shadow that obstructs it appears as well.

Receiving the light from the back, the identity of the mountain that shone like a blue gem was a shell.

This is my first time seeing it, but...it is big.

When I check on Ema, she was also looking at it dumbfounded.

I have only seen her sharp expressions lately, so this one is rare.

Blue Moon.

A giant turtle.

Or is it?

It is floating after all.

It is great that it won't be walking and creating steps that would resound and destroy the floor though.

Its gigantic figure contrasted with how it floated lightly.

Or more like, I am surprised it could enter.

I was now completely confident of the abnormal designing abilities of the Eldwas.

"Nice to meet you, King. I am the Blue Moon, Fua."

Common language!

For a mythical beast like this to be able to use common language is incredibly fresh.

Ema seems to have returned to herself when the Blue Moon called me King, she fixed her expression and faced him.

"Nice to meet you, Fua-san. My name is Misumi Makoto, over here is my subordinate, Ema." (Makoto) "To think that the one who gave birth to this vast sea was a young and small human, the world is truly big. And so, will I be able to stay in this plentiful sea?" (Fua) "Of course. What we want to know here is your approximate residence, and confirm if you have the will to reside here. After that, we will only be telling you some rules." (Makoto) "I am grateful. The Blue Moons have a relationship with the sea and we leave children. I for some reason didn't have a good compatibility with the sea of that Goddess' 'world', so I was troubled. I still don't know if I will be able to live well in this sea, but it is incredibly comfortable." (Fua) It seems like the Blue Moon considers that this is not the world of the Goddess, but some other completely different place.

When he says they have a relationship with the sea, it was literally, as they don't need a companion to reproduce.

From his explanation, it feels like they really have a kid with the sea.

Even though he has the personality of a male, he doesn't feel anything out of place in the fact that he is giving birth to eggs himself. I thought

that maybe the gender in their race is vague.

...I wonder why, different from the time with Root, I feel respect with him.

It must be that, it is because the person in question is not weird, probably.

And he is the only one wishing to migrate.

In this time's migration of Asora, there's only two races that are wishing to migrate alone, so this is one of them.

It seems like both of them don't have any problems with it, but I wonder if they won't get lonely.

For the Blue Moon, it seems like as long as there's the sea, he won't be feeling lonely at all.

Anyways, it is a composed race.

Obviously, there were no problems, so he is approved.

As he was leaving, he told me that he wanted me to watch when he gives birth, but...when I asked when was his breeding time, he said that it is once every 500 to 1,000 years.

...I don't think I will be able to witness it.

It is on the level that I would need incredible luck.

I answered that at that time, I would love to, but I think the chances of it will be low.

"He was truly a mountain." (Ema)

"Right." (Makoto)

"It seems like it was named Blue Moon because of the shell that shines lightly in the moonlight, but even when looking at him in daytime, it was beautiful." (Ema) "Yeah. His address was uncertain, but he said that he would respond to the thought transmissions, so when there's any business, the races in the vicinity or I will be moving." (Makoto) "I am thinking about asking him to report of any resources he finds." (Ema)

“Isn’t that fine? Since he is wilfully swimming and floating around, he will probably be able to find unexpected things.” (Makoto) He was gigantic, but he had a truly carefree atmosphere.

It might also be because my image of a turtle is affecting my impression though.

I wasn’t overwhelmed like Ema after all.

“The next one is also a candidate that wants to migrate alone.” (Ema)

“Ah, her huh. If I remember correctly, she was a Scylla, right?” (Makoto)

“Yeah. She has a slight problem as well, so please confirm it in the interview that is to come.” (Ema) “Understood.” (Makoto)

“Well then, I will call her.” (Ema)

A while after the words of Ema...

A girl around the same age as me enters alone.

Scylla.

It seems like in the world of the Goddess, it is a race that doesn’t have that many in numbers.

It is incredibly belligerent towards humans, and for that reason, they go out of their way to attack ships, and even though they are able to silently live at an island on the ocean, they end up living close to the human towns.

Even though their numbers are low, among the sailors, it is considered the strongest mamono within the sea.

In the first place, the races that come to this Asora are races that are low in numbers, but for some reason, a girl has come here alone.

“Nice to meet you, Asora’s King. I am the Scylla, Levi.” (Levi)

The Scylla gracefully bows.

So there’s sailor uniforms in this world.

This is the first time I see a person wearing it.

It feels like I am looking at a high school girl.

“Nice to meet you, Levi-san. I am Misumi Makoto. Over here is Ema, my subordinate.” (Makoto) Ema bows with a slightly stiff expression.

“Makoto-sama, I heard that this is the last interview. In other words, until today, I was at the passing level, right?” (Levi) “Yeah.” (Makoto)

“Thanks. Having so many worthy opponents was fun.” (Levi)

The report of the Scylla was filled with battle information.

It wasn't between migration candidates.

It seems like she went and confronted the strong-looking animals that live in the sea by herself.

And at times, those targets could also be living beings from the land as well.

It is certain that she has quite the aggressive personality.

“There's a few questions I would want to ask you myself. Is it okay, Levi-san?” (Ema) “Of course, Ema-san. Ask me anything.” (Levi)

“You Scyllas attack humans because you want to, right? But in this place there's no humans, and it can't be said that Makoto-sama is one. In that case, what was your objective in migrating?” (Ema) ...What am I, Ema-san?

“Regarding the question about the race as a whole, the answer to your former question is yes. And regarding the latter, almost all the race has no answer for it. That's why only I am here. I am an eccentric Scylla.” (Levi) “...Let me be straight here. Do you hold any hostility towards Makoto-sama, or evil intent?” (Ema) At the words of Levi-san that were as if dancing around the topic, Ema throws her a straightforward question.

That worrywart side of her makes her ladylike.

“None at all.” (Levi)

“Is that because you are an eccentric one?” (Ema)

Against the sarcastic-filled tone of Ema, Levi nods at it with a wide smile

devoid of evil.

“That’s right. I don’t have fun at all against humans.” (Levi)

“Not fun?” (Ema)

“That’s right. The majority of them are weak, and yet, at my surroundings, there were people that were competing over who defeated the most humans. And they do it properly without being caught by the eyes of the Goddess, that’s just low and boring.” (Levi) “...”

“...Even though we have been born with such a strong body, right?” (Levi)

The conversation of Levi-san and Ema continue.

“In other words, the reason why you wanted to come to Asora was because there were strong people there?” (Ema) “Yes! This is a splendid place! There are people I have never seen before, and I also saw several strong Neptune Sea Lords, who I have always wanted to fight with one day. You Highland Orcs, the Mist Lizards, and those Arkes as well!” (Levi) In an excited state, Levi-san speaks about the forces of Asora in her own vision.

How...impressive.

But hearing the words that show her way of thinking, I noticed something.

“Ah Levi-san, sorry for interrupting but, in that case, Levi-san...you have no hostility or evil intent at all, but you want to fight with me as well, is that what you are trying to say?” (Makoto) “...Not yet. But in a future, I would want to have a match with you. First, I will be polishing my strength with the system called Asora Ranking.” (Levi) The Asora Ranking is the mock battle system that Tomoe began within Asora. Obviously, it is only composed of land races, and until now, there have not been other races mentioning even the name of it, but...Levi-san already knew of it, and moreover, she wants to participate in it.

“Asora Ranking, is it? But that system has rules that don’t consider the sea races at all, so...” (Makoto) “I don’t mind at all. I don’t have any intentions to seek for a change in the rules.” (Levi) “Are you thinking

about living in land?” (Makoto)

“Hm, that’s...there’s fights that can only be tasted in the sea, so I don’t want to choose between them.” (Levi) The fighting standard came in.

This person, there’s probably a lot of people in Asora she could get along with.

A battle junkie that doesn’t hold any real discrimination huh.

...I can’t be sure of it though.

“Giant sharks, sea urchins, shelled animals, and eels; it seems like you have been fighting quite a lot, but why is it ‘not yet’ for me?” (Makoto) To confirm about it, I once again interrupt and try asking.

About the record in the sea fights, there’s a lot of self-filing, but counting the wins and defeats, there’s quite the number.

It doesn’t seem like she is choosing her opponents.

Within those, there were also some where she barely escaped with her life.

And for some reason, after that, she has challenged them around three more times.

“...I just can’t imagine it at all, fighting Makoto-sama. Even so, I don’t feel like it will be boring. At those times, it is mostly because it is an opponent I am unable to do anything about. I am speaking from experience. And so, not yet. By the way, Tomoe-sama, Mio-sama, and Shiki-sama give the same feeling.” (Levi) “I see. To live here, there are rules as well. It is fine to consider that you are accepting those when you migrate, right?” (Makoto) For now, it looks okay.

So I decided to enter the last confirmation.

“Yes. I will study about things I don’t understand like currency, so at first, I might be a bother, but I would like you to please let me live here.” (Levi) Currency huh.

Tomoe has done something unreasonable about that after all.

Well, that's fine.

Levi-san is saying that she will be adapting, so...

"Well then Levi-san, I accept your migration. Looking forward to being with you." (Makoto) "Thank you very much!" (Levi)

Levi-san lowers her head deeply, but she energetically lifted it up and made a turn.

She is leaving.

Could it be that in her case, since she has been with a race that says things like 'I have obtained x number of hyuman ears~', she is lenient?

If it's fine if there are strong opponents, then Asora might be a paradise for her.

"Ah."

While I was thinking that, Levi-san stopped.

Her gestures as well remind me of a high school girl.

No, she looked like one.

Until this happened.

"But if there's a war with some other place, definitely call me, please. Because at that place, there would be no problem no matter how many I kill after all~. Well then, I am excusing myself~." (Levi) The expression of Levi-san who turned as she laughed, the gap between what she said and her tone made my back shiver.

The documents did say that the Scylla have a deep hatred towards hyumans, I don't know about the reason though.

Could it be that they are actually battle junkies that don't mind if they are hyuman or not as long as they kill something?

She is odd as I thought.

"She is only good at fighting, so in a sense, she is a safe girl, but...is it okay, Waka-sama?" (Ema) "Even if she participates in the ranking, I don't think she has it yet to enter the core of it, so I think there won't be any

problems.” (Makoto) “I think that those kind of girls will change for the worse when the environment is appropriate though... Should I call it strengthening, or wickedness, or maybe mentally abnormal?” (Ema) <She is making a pun with 強化, 凶化, 狂化; all of them are pronounced as kyouka but have different meanings> For some reason, I feel like all of those fit her.

The Asora Ranking is properly made so that it doesn't turn into killing each other, so at that part, I don't have to worry.

If I have Shiki leave her without gas from time to time, it should be fine.

...I definitely don't want to fight against a high schooler with a transformed body that shouts spells as she attacks me.

“Ehm, about the next one...” (Ema)

The next ones were the Sirens.

Their upper half was that of a woman, and their lower half that of a bird.

I thought they would have wings on their backs, but the Sirens that were in front of me had wings instead of arms.

It is a race that has a stronger ratio of bird traits.

They live mainly at the seashore and at reefs, and in Asora, they said that they like islands that are slightly open into the sea and has cliffs rising perpendicularly.

There's no problem in having them live in one, so I gave them permission.

These girls are similar to the mermaids in the sense that they are pacifists, and like to sing.

It is a race that has only girls, and in that part, they are similar to Gorgons.

In the time of the exam, they discussed of these circumstances with the other races, and it seems like it didn't turn into any problem, so I decided not to get involved in it.

People like Lime should be relieved about that.

Even if he were attacked because of a misunderstanding, the experienced Lime will probably be totally in, yeah.

They told me that they were planning on having the Lorelei in charge of the musical instruments, and the Mermaids and Sirens for the singing, so in the flow, Ema spoke about the festival, and they flew around and were shouting in joy.

Looks like they are an energetic race.

When they told me the Neptunes will be the one doing the dancing, I was personally taken aback.

They asked me to please take care of the Loreleis that will be coming after, and after lowering their head, they left.

Getting along is something great.

“They were cheerful people.” (Ema)

“It is great that Ema doesn’t have to get angry.” (Makoto)

Remembering the disaster with the fairies, I tease her.

“That was because they were lacking way too much manners! And in reality, they are now able to act in a somewhat decent manner now, you know? In other words, they could do it, and yet, they didn’t. I was angry because of that!” (Ema) ...

I can’t say much about others, but I feel like this is similar to seeing circus lions jumping fire rings, and then expecting the wild lions to do that as well.

“Is there something wrong?” (Ema)

“No, nothing.” (Makoto)

“Well then, I will call the Loreleis next.” (Ema)

“Yes.” (Makoto)

Lorelei huh.

It is a type of demon race it seems.

Honestly speaking, there isn't much I would question them about.

...Because you know, thanks to Sari doing her best and working a lot, almost all the questions I wanted answered are already written in the documents after all.

I even think that it would be fine if it just went: 'How's been lately?', 'Not bad', 'Then I am looking forward to being with you', 'Excuse us then'.

Different from Tomoe, Sari must be a girl that likes to gather all the information perfectly in the documents.

In other words, it can also be said that she is a girl that doesn't set up things for me to experience for myself.

The interview with the Loreleis was truly just casual talk.

Confirming the content in the documents, and also speaking about Sari.

It seems like the Lorelei are truly being helped out by Sari. It seems like Sari is also feeling affection towards them as she interacts with them.

She has slept over at their village a few times already, so I can tell from that.

"Ah, now that I think about it, I heard that you guys are good at playing with instruments?" (Ema) Ema must be thinking about touching the topic of the festival for last, she talks about one of their specialties.

"Yes. We make musical instruments, and we are also specialized in playing them. In Asora there are many materials we have yet to touch, so we are looking forward to it."

"We are also looking forward to hearing your musical performance."
(Ema)

"With the cooperation of the other races, I think we will be able to do so in a near future. We are all doing our best in order to entertain you."

I think that it is quite special to be able to play musical instruments, since I am no good at it.

In the case of the Lorelei, it seems like they are able to combine their magic with their melodies, so being diligent in their musical performance will also count in increasing their strength at battle.

Hm?

But if they are able to do musical performances, can't they dance as well to match it?

"Uhm, it is your specialty to do musical performances but, could it be that you are also good at dancing as well?" (Makoto) I tried asking them.

"Yes. We are not that good at singing, but at the village, we would always pair musical performances with dancing."

Oh~.

Then let's have them do that for the coming festival!

"In that case, I would like to see it at the time when you do your performance." (Makoto) "No well, the ones in charge of the dancing will be the Neptunes. There isn't that many chances to see their super high-class dancing, and it is incredibly rare to be able to do a musical performance when that happens. We are thinking of concentrating in our musical performance which is our main role."

...I am unable to evade the Tuna and Red King Crab dragon palace dance.

Is it okay to expect something when they say it is super high-class?

Inside me, the image of the Neptunes are already a profound mystery though.

Regarding the singing and music, they have already seized the dancing role.

"I see. Understood. I am looking forward to it." (Makoto)

"Yes. And so, will we be able to continue living in this land?"

"Yeah. I am thinking about having you guys be the leads of the harbor town." (Makoto) "Thank you very much!"

They are more of a land race after all.

“From hereafter, I will be cooperating with Sari-dono and working hard as a part of everyone.”

“I think that Sari will be involved with you in the future as well, but I am thinking about having her do the follow-up for the races that will be migrating. That’s why she will not be able to make contact with you guys that often, please do understand.” (Makoto) “Is it a promotion? That’s great.”

“There’s worth in doing it, is what the person herself said as well, and she is talented. In the first place, if I were to leave Ema here with two settlements, she would collapse.” (Makoto) “Waka-sama!” (Ema)

“I want her to keep the strength to get angry at me like this. I am thinking about having Sari do her best. Everyone, please cooperate as well.” (Makoto) It didn’t seem like Sari said ‘there’s worth in doing it’ to please me, so I decided to leave her in charge of the sea business.

Pushing it to Ema would be a bit too much after all.

In terms of trust and results, it is true that I would like to leave it to Ema, but thinking about how exhausting this work would be, I could tell that it would be hard.

She is telling me the things in a refreshing manner, but in reality, we are low in hands.

This is something that I understand even if not told, so I don’t touch that topic though.

“To think that us who are related to the demon race, can live in such an abundant land...Fuh... Live is truly unpredictable.”

“Right. The demon race has increased their territory and isn’t as bad as before, but that side is shouldering a war. You all will be making a town peacefully. It is truly unpredictable.” (Makoto) “From now on, we are in your hands, Waka-sama.”

“I am looking forward to being with you.” (Makoto)

Maybe they are filled with emotion, the Lorelei had tears in their eyes as they left.

The Lorelei that abandoned living in that harsh land and searched for hope in the sea, it seems like they didn't live an abundant life at all either.

Having piled up misfortune over misfortune, they probably see Asora as a paradise.

If this brings them happiness, it makes me happy as well.

"A type of demon, Lorelei huh." (Makoto)

"As expected of people that have lived in a harsh environment, they are all people that have high endurance." (Ema) It seems like in this place, being a type of demon is viewed as a simple difference in the race.

In other words, it is like the difference of a white person and a black person.

Looking at it from a genetic point, they might have a bit more of a difference than that, but honestly, I wonder if they have that much difference to call them a type though.

"The demon race that's challenging the humans and the Goddess together with the Demon Lord, and the Lorelei that came to Asora with the flow. I wonder which one is happier." (Makoto) "That question changes in answer depending on what they consider as happiness, you know?" (Ema) "Ema, don't you have a lingering discomfort between them and the demon race?" (Makoto) Ema answered straightly, but I was a bit bothered.

There's the event where the Highland Orcs were almost pushed into a dangerous state by the demon race.

It is not like everyone knows this, but she knows it.

"I don't have anything to say about the Lorelei. About the demon race...I do have a bit, but even so, it is the truth that thanks to that, I was able to meet Waka-sama. I am not Waka-sama, but I am beginning to think that everything is okay as long as the result is good." (Ema) "I see." (Makoto)

“Well then, I will call the next ones.” (Ema)

“Got it.” (Makoto)

The next ones...are here.

They are here.

Neptunes!

<TLN: This part has heavy japanese puns about the past and with naming, so I am not sure if I have accurately translated them. If someone spots any mistakes, please point them out.> Three of them.

A tuna and a thorny crab, probably the one they call a Red King Crab.

And the other one is...a whale.

It is a whale but...hey, it is small.

Is that the punchline?

For a whale to be around two meters is...obviously small.

“Nice to meet you, Neptunes. My name is Misumi Makoto. The one here is the Highland Orc, Ema, my subordinate.” (Makoto) Until now, I have lost in presenting myself first, but they are different to the other races in a lot of meanings, so I hyped myself up and made the greetings.

When I did that, the tuna and the crab that were at the left and right lowered their knees.

It is a gesture that I feel would be done by knights.

And then, the mini-whale that was at the very center, made one step forward and does a refined bow.

Even though it is a whaleman that has hyuman limbs growing out of it, I felt elegance from it.

That’s impressive.

“Nice to meet you, King of Asora, Makoto-sama.”

After saying that, the whale took a step back.

“I am in charge of the circulation of goods as a courier, the tuna race,

name's Tsuna. Nice to meet you, Makoto-sama."

A tuna named Tsuna.

We are joking with the names already.

"As my strong point is strength, I am mainly in charge of public works, constructions, and physical jobs, Red King Crab race, name's Hanasaki. Nice to meet you, Makoto-sama."

Didn't you say you were a Red King Crab?!

What's this about a Hawaiian crab?! <Hanasaki can mean 'coming from Hawaii'.> Just what are you?!

"And I am the head and a fireman, protecting the living of everyone, whale race, name's Serwhale Gay. Being granted this audience today, I feel truly happy."

...Gay.

Goddess...just what are you creating?

No, for that Goddess to create something like this, the molding is just way too terr-....way too unique.

They might be the antique races that originally lived here.

In that case, it would mean they have an amount of history comparable to the Superior Dragons.

Now that I think about it, there's no Superior Dragon supervising the sea, right? Could it be that these guys are just like their name state, the protectors of the sea? That's not it, right?

"A fireman, is it? Uhm, sorry for the rudeness, but from my knowledge, a fireman just doesn't give a good image though." (Makoto) In the first place, it is weird for your job to be a fireman, right?

Aren't you in the sea?

There's no fires.

When talking about firemen, it is the ones from the Edo-period. <the firemen they are referring to is written differently.> Or more like, it may

not sound bad, but from what I know, the jobs of those firemens was to destroy the houses that were in fire.

Could it be that the Neptunes are lenient in their housing?

“You know well. It is certainly true that within our race the word fireman means the fireman that you refer to, and it normally doesn’t have a good image. But I am surprised. It seems like you already knew beforehand about the courier and the strong<both are works stemming from the Edo-period and written differently>, and on top of that, you even knew about the firemen. You are knowledgeable like a scholar.”

This self-proclaimed fireman is incredibly gentlemanly.

This person is totally talking in Kanjis<japanese writing style>, but I will probably lose if I am bothered by it.

Also, it would be troublesome to call him only as Gay, so I should also add the Ser as well.

Let’s do that.

He said I was like a scholar, but things like couriers, strong, and firemen; as a Japanese, it is not that impressive of knowledge though. In terms of Edo times, 取る替えるべえとか, might be considered knowledgeable. <No idea what that means, so in a sense, it is truly rare? :P> I am probably a bit more knowledgeable than the normal.

“Serwhale-sama knows the meaning of that name, and even with that, he is still calling himself a fireman.”

Tsuna does a follow-up.

“There’s no one as noble as Serwhale-sama.”

Hanasaki also speaks.

It is probably better to not worry about this guy’s identity.

Honestly, I don’t know anything aside from his name.

In terms of fleshiness, I have seen travelling programs where crabs had fleshy legs like that, but in terms of ecology and source, I completely don’t

know what's the difference he has with the Red King Crabs.

“Is there some sort of circumstance?” (Makoto)

Leaving aside their looks and composition, the Neptunes have a good reputation with all the races, and on top of that, they are incredibly cooperative with us.

Not only Sari, they also have a good evaluation from Tomoe, Mio and Shiki.

From the documents, there were no problems found, a race with moral rectitude.

If there's some sort of circumstance from that race, I want to hear it here.

“We came here with the intention to tell Makoto-sama. It may become an embarrassment for us Neptunes, but will you please listen?”

“Of course. If you are going to be living in Asora, you are practically family. I think that we have to receive those circumstances as well.”
(Makoto) “The Neptunes are existences that can be called the protectors of the sea world. We have varied outward appearances, but all of us possess excelling abilities, and since time immemorial, we have been protecting the order of the sea.”

“The protectors of the sea...” (Makoto)

No way...

“Even if we are called the protectors of the sea, as long as we are a race, we will be targeted by friction and civil war, and there were times when we have divided our forces and done wars that drag other races into it. This is something that's not recorded in the human history, but it is not like the sea has been living in constant peace like how the land sees of it.”

“I see.” (Makoto)

So the sea has also experienced a big war within the sea huh.

“Right now there's nothing like that and we are living peacefully, but a problem has occurred. I who am the son of the King, am actually a twin, so

there's an exact older brother of mine."

"In that case, the one who will be inheriting the throne will be your older brother?" (Makoto) "No, he has already inherited it. I don't have any intentions to fight over the throne, and intended to help brother, so my brother was able to smoothly inherit it without any obstruction."

Then there's no problem.

"It is stupid to divide the race and fight, and it would have been fine to just offer this body of mine to the Neptunes as a General of the army, but the fact that I thoughtlessly got stronger than my brother, had individual abilities surpassing him, and was the top of the army, must have been bad. Steadily, a bad atmosphere was beginning to born between my brother and me."

...It is beginning to turn muddy.

Even though they are like a gag, why does it turn into such a serious conversation, Neptunes?

"In other words, even though you have higher abilities to become the King, your brother became the King. People that didn't like this began appearing." (Makoto) "In terms of disposition as a king, my brother and I have no difference. It is just that I am higher in physical and magical capacity. But it is true that there were people resembling what you mentioned, Makoto-sama."

At this rate, he is probably also higher in knowledge and grades.

And maybe he was more popular too.

"My brother began thinking that it would be dangerous for me to do as I wish with the army, he fortified his faction, and tried to take in the army into the authority of the King. To avoid the concentration in authority, the Neptunes tried to decentralize the authority with a few methods. My normal brother would have been able to reach an understanding though."

"The Neptunes have quite the advanced government." (Makoto)

The words decentralization of authority, just when did I hear these

words?

I have heard centralization a lot though.

It is incredible that they have a lot of different ways of thinking instead of just thinking about who's the better one.

Since coming to this world, I have finally begun to understand the words separation of powers, central and local authority; words that sound like some sort of chant.

Until then, it was more of memorization.

“Thank you very much. And then, after that, I obstructed the ones who seemed to have excessive centralization of power, and tried to work in mending my relationship with my brother, but in the end, it turned into a situation where it was impossible to avoid a civil war. I could only be embarrassed by my incompetence.”

“A civil war.” (Makoto)

“It was a situation where I was searching for a way to avoid it. But there was a light. It was for me to be exiled from the Neptunes. My brother probably said those words with the intention to declare a war, but for me, those were truly words of salvation. I accepted the exile, was called a firemen, and became a wanderer of the sea.”

I don't know how many volumes are in the biography of Serwhale, but it seems like it has ended.

“Ehm, then after that, you visited several places, and ended living with the Neptunes of other places?” (Makoto) “No. After being exiled, warriors and populace from my country chased after me. But there were pursuers from my brother, and we were somehow able to cut through it with the minimal amount of fights, created a hidden village, and we were invited by Asora.”

“That was impressive timing.” (Makoto)

Seriously.

“We are truly grateful for this miracle. From now on, we will consider

this sea as our homeland, hold hands with the people that are living there, and serve Makoto-sama. That's what we have decided."

The strength in his eyes is incredible.

As expected of someone that has been troubled by raging waves like the one I have heard just now.

Even someone as competent as him was unable to stop a political strife that has picked up in pace.

How scary.

"The Neptunes have a good reputation with the other races, so there's no problem. That's why I don't mind having you live here. I have already received the okay to our rules beforehand so, is there anything else you want to tell me?" (Makoto) "Thank you very much. I think it is truly shameless for us to be saying it, but we have two wishes. The first is that we want to meet with the strong warriors of the Asora ranking, and we want to request for an accommodation<maybe a spar?>. The other one is something related to the conversation just now; if there's a possible problem regarding the Neptunes my brother commands, we can't participate. Those are the points."

So they can't participate.

A valid line.

I even think that it wouldn't be strange for him to tell us not to fight him.

"Then are you saying that if the Neptunes invade from outside, you won't be fighting?" (Ema) Ema refutes.

Even for a possibility, it is way too improbable.

"If something like that happens, we will commit suicide. I understand that it won't serve as atonement for anything, but even so, we are unable to fight, and it will trouble the other races. Choosing sides...would be unbearable. Just that, we are unable to bear it."

"You can't. Suicide is not permitted. Please think of another way aside

from that.” (Makoto) “But...Makoto-sama...”

“Sorry, I have made a strange supposition. I will leave this case as a homework of the Neptunes to Waka-sama.” (Ema) Ema cuts off the flow of the conversation.

Maybe because the answer differed a lot from what she expected.

“Ema-dono, this is something that we have discussed with everyone of us...”

“Serwhale-dono, please understand. It might be better to think of a way to turn that chance into zero. There are a number of people here that are able to make that possible.” (Ema) The eyes of Ema were serious.

By turning the chances to zero, does she mean...

“Zero?! Could it be...”

“I will leave it to your imagination. Suicide is not something that Waka-sama, me, and anyone wishes for. Please discuss it properly once more.” (Ema) “Understood. Well then, with this, we will be excusing ourselves. Waka-sama, Ema-dono, we are looking forward to being with you.”

“Same here.” (Makoto)

Zero huh.

Ah, I see.

If we slaughter all the Neptunes from his brother’s side, that chance would disappear.

The chances of invading Asora are low to begin with, but if we were to make it zero, it is probably that.

Looking at the back of Serwhale-san, I remember something I had forgotten.

“Ah, right. Sergay-san!” (Makoto)

“What is it, Waka-sama?”

Sergay is already calling me Waka-sama.

“I can’t find the relation between being exiled and turning into a fireman though. Because there shouldn’t be any fire extinguishing in the sea.”
(Makoto) “Ah, about that. Before being in the army, I was dealing with volcanos.”

“Volcanos?” (Makoto)

In the sea?

“In the sea, there’s things called submarine volcanos. They erupt just like the ones in land. The scale of the ones I did were small, but there was a time when I stopped one of those eruptions myself, and since then, I have been called the Number One Target, Serwhale.”

“Submarine volcanos. Is that so. That’s why it is called firemen. I understand now.” (Makoto) “Well then.”

The three lower their heads deeply, and this time for sure, they leave.

Number one target and currently a firemen huh.

The submarine volcanoes are fires, I see.

“W-Waka-sama?” (Ema)

As I was nodding in understanding, Ema speaks to me with a trembling voice.

“What is it?” (Makoto)

“That person said he was able to stop the eruption of a mountain with that small body of his though?” (Ema) “...Oh.” (Makoto)

Even if he says it was a small eruption, it is still quite the big deal.

I haven’t seen a submarine volcano, but it is probably quite the exploit.

“It seems like there’s powerful people in the sea as well. I have to tell everyone.” (Ema) “Even if their names were gags as well, they were diligent people. Neptunes, how fearsome.” (Makoto) And so, we did interviews with several other races, and in the end, there were races that could only be in the sea, so we went to meet them.

We were safely able to decide on the migration of all the races.

The population of Asora –well, I don't know if it is okay to call it population– has surpassed two thousand now.

Hm.

So from two thousand and higher, I am being recognized as Waka-sama<young master> huh.

I am fine with being called Landlord-san which they sometimes call me with though.



Second floor of the Kusunoha Company, at the reception room.

“Shiki-san, what was the reaction of Raidou-sensei?”

At the time when Makoto was doing an interview with the races of the sea, Shiki-san was meeting with four of his students: Jin, Amelia, Sif, and Yuno.

It is the students that currently wish to be employed in the Kusunoha Company.

Jin who didn't have the surplus to even place the tea in his mouth, said this tense words to Shiki, and Shiki showed the usual gentle smile he shows to his students as he opens his mouth.

“About Jin, he said that he can't put out that much salary, but it seemed like...he was positive in it.” (Shiki) “!! Is that true?!” (Jin)

“Yeah, just that, I think it is a job that won't bring much money despite its difficulty.” (Shiki) “As long as I can eat and sleep, gold is only worth that much. In the Kusunoha Company, they provide equipment when needed, right?” (Jin) “When needed, and corresponding to the person's ability, you know?” (Shiki)

“Yes! Yosh, yosh!!” (Jin)

Jin was happier than ever at the words of Shiki.

It was a scene that one could tell he considers the Kusunoha Company that appealing.

Also, he said that as long as he can eat, have somewhere to sleep, and be provided with equipment, gold is of no importance. It was a scene where one could have a peek of that.

“Shiki-san, what about us?” (Sif)

Sif asks Shiki worried.

Even if they have a connection with her father, Yuno did something that displeased Raidou at the previous lecture(or at least that’s what the sisters think).

They were thinking that they are in no way in the safe zone.

The expression of Yuno was also stiff.

“About Sif and Yuno...” (Shiki)

The silence of a few seconds felt as if a gulp could be heard.

“Your father has requested of it as well, and he has understood your passion with your decision of surely passing the guild exam. He will probably not have you work in dangerous places, but he says that he wouldn’t mind having you work.” (Shiki) “Aaah~, Yuno!” (Sif)

“Onee-chan!” (Yuno)

The Rembrandt sisters hug each other.

It was a happiness as if they had already passed the exam.

“Just that, he said that he won’t be able to treat you specially in your salary. If you are unable to accept this...” (Shiki) “Something like that, we haven’t thought of it as a problem from the very beginning! Right now I want to test more of my own possibilities. For that sake, I am thinking that being by the side of Raidou-sensei and Shiki-san is best.” (Sif) “Just as Onee-chan says! I also want to train myself more and more. I want to try going to the wasteland one day, and I think that I will be able to experience things I won’t be able to experience anywhere else in Kuzunoha Company!” (Yuno) With this, from the four, three now have expressions filled with happiness.

There’s one left.

Only Amelia.

“Shiki-san, what did Sensei say about me?” (Amelia)

“Hm, right. Jin, Sif, Yuno, can you please leave for a bit?” (Shiki)

“!”

The three were able to tell the meaning of those words in an instant.

And Amelia herself as well.

She closed her eyes and hung her head slightly.

She exhaled deeply and lifted her head.

“Shiki-san, there’s no need to do that. Please say it in front of everyone here.” (Amelia) “Is that okay?” (Shiki)

“Yes.”

“...”

The three were silent.

Their faces were tense like the time before they heard the answer from Shiki.

It may be the business of someone else, but Amelia is a member of their party, and is a comrade of them in the truest meaning of the word.

“Amelia, from the perspective of Waka-sama, you have no specialized ability, and your personal ability is already reaching its limit. Looking at it only from the present state, you are excellent in synthesizing, but it is easy to see that you are the precocious type that other students can catch up to and surpass.” (Shiki) ...

Hearing the harsh evaluation, Amelia’s expression turns bitter.

“You are a talented person that by gathering experience you can have an active role in the future, but...” (Shiki) “...”

“You are not necessary in Kuzunoha Company.” (Shiki)

“!!”

“That’s all.” (Shiki)

Words like 'No way' and 'this must be a lie' were leaking from them.

And the person in question, Amelia, was clearly told that she was not necessary, and she is unable to hide her shock.

It may be faint, but in her wide opened eyes, there were tears coming out.

It was something rare for the firm Amelia.

It was truly something rare.

“ ... ”

Shiki exchanged looks with Jin, and noticing the meaning of it, he took Sif and Yuno, and they left the room.

Silently, the door closed.

“As I thought, Sensei noticed it huh. That I am not a big deal.” (Amelia)

“ ... ”

Maybe because she knew that they were alone now, Amelia opened her mouth.

About Amelia being precocious, the fact that there's the chance it will turn for the worse in the future, being able to only gather low amounts of experience, isn't something Makoto discovered.

It was Shiki.

And it was him who gave her the harsh evaluation and the answer that she is not needed. Not Makoto.

Even so, Shiki told Amelia this as if they were the words of Makoto.

From the state of the four and Shiki, it was clear that they were asking for the opinion of Makoto regarding their employment in Kuzunoha Company.

But the reason why Shiki falsified the words of Makoto is unknown.

“I knew. Compared to the others, I don't have something that makes me stand out. Even so, I am not an all-purpose type either. That's why I tried

polishing my leadership abilities, tried to be useful with my knowledge, and I also tried scheming..." (Amelia) "Yeah, you did put your effort." (Shiki)

"Shiki-san, if I were to obtain the approval of the merchant guild, do I still have a chance? Is there anything, anything I can do to be accepted in Kuzunoha Company?!" (Amelia) "...Sif and Yuno huh." (Shiki)

"Sif has the magic synthesis and incredible talent, Yuno is compatible with that suit, but if I just need to be as good as those two, then I can try even harder and..." (Amelia) "You must know already, Amelia. Those two are the daughters of Rembrandt-shi. Even if those two had lower ability than you, he would have hired them." (Shiki) "That's called having connections, right?" (Amelia)

"That's right." (Shiki)

"That's unfair." (Amelia)

"Right." (Shiki)

Amelia was pressing on as if she was holding in something, and Shiki was answering indifferently.

"...Why, why only me?" (Amelia)

"It is okay to cry. Amelia, you are trying too hard. It is good to work hard and look up, but there's also things that can't be gained with only that. Learn to cry and break. You have been trying too hard without knowing of that." (Shiki) The words of Shiki that were close to her feelings, finally made Amelia cry loudly.

Just like how Shiki told her to cry, she didn't stop, and he silently held Amelia.

Even though she called Raidou an idiot just as her feelings told her to, she didn't blame him, and even when she blamed herself, she wasn't angered.

The feelings Amelia was voicing out are coming from her true feelings, but she also understands that they weren't all of her feelings.

Even though she respects him, she also holds minus feelings towards him.

Just because she voiced out only the latter doesn't mean the feelings of respect disappear.

After Amelia cried, cried, and cried her eyes out, the force calmed down. By the time she had turned quiet and had entrusted her own weight to Shiki...

"Amelia, please listen." (Shiki)

"..."

There was no response.

But Shiki continued without minding.

"About Waka-sama's decision, honestly speaking, I also agree with it."
(Shiki)

"..."

Makoto is simply not that interested in Amelia, and if she were to supplicate, he probably wouldn't mind hiring her.

He has that part of him.

That's why Shiki replaced his own words of Amelia and made them as if they were Makoto's.

"You are weak. The Kuzunoha Company has a lot of harsh works, and Jin and you will without doubt be thrown into it at a point in time." (Shiki)

"..."

"And you will die there. Without doubt." (Shiki)

"!!"

"There's low chances for you to make a drastic change now. If you continue as always, your chances of dying are certain and you will have no choice but to make a drastic change. Even so, if you wish for that, you will probably have to throw away the style you have had until now." (Shiki) "...I heard that the Kuzunoha Company has safe workplaces." (Amelia)

“There are. Just that, in those places, there’s no Jin, Waka-sama, and...I am not there either.” (Shiki) “!!”

“That’s why, Amelia, even if there’s dangerous work, you will most likely come to this side. And you will lose your life. That’s something clear to the eye. I also concurred with Waka-sama. Even if you don’t come to our place, there’s plenty other good jobs for you.” (Shiki) “I don’t care about a workplace with good conditions. The only place I want to work in, is here after all.” (Amelia) When she said only place, Amelia grabbed Shiki.

Shiki also understood what she meant.

And with this reply to the comment of a safe workplace, Amelia noticed her own feelings as well.

“Gritonia Empire has invited you, right? Isn’t it a desirable major power?” (Shiki) “I hate cold places and the womanizer hero.” (Amelia)

“There will probably be someone from the Limia Kingdom coming to probe about this as well, you know?” (Shiki) “Are you saying this seriously? I am the very person that killed a high noble of their place, you know? Misura, Izumo, and Daena too. I definitely won’t go to Limia Kingdom. It would be a different story if the person is an incredible idiot or is able to interpret everything in a positive manner and has the heaven’s luck though.” (Amelia) (Or if that person is able to unconsciously nullify all the obstructions. Just like Waka-sama.) With the words ‘incredible idiot’, Shiki made a wry smile in a manner that couldn’t be seen by Amelia.

Because his own master had surfaced in his mind.

“I can prepare a good intermediary for Lorel as well though?” (Shiki)

“Please give that to Izumo. That boy, he is shouldering it by himself, but he is quite troubled about his home.” (Amelia) “I will think about it.” (Shiki)

“Shiki-san, I want to enter Kuzunoha Company. And it is probably for a bad reason compared to the other three.” (Amelia) “...”

“But I am serious. I will do anything. Anything...so...” (Amelia)

Shiki had replaced his own words as Makoto's.

It is an action he normally would never do.

Because it is an action that if not handled properly, would make Amelia hold animosity towards Makoto.

Leaving aside if the person holding the animosity can cause harm to Makoto, it isn't something that a person serving him should do.

The reason was because Shiki himself was unable to hate her.

This student that loved him.

To the point that he wanted to pull her aside in order for her to not die.

Maybe because his undead side complicated things, he still hasn't thought of protecting her himself, but compared to the many girls that are simple students or came to confess her feelings to him, his awareness of her is definitely different.

"Anything, you say?" (Shiki)

"Yes." (Amelia)

"Even if it is...to abandon your humanity?" (Shiki)

"Eh?" (Amelia)

Amelia lifted her face and looks at the expression of Shiki.

He does look sad, but he is asking her resolve, an expression that's definitely not that of someone joking.

"...Trying hard and continuing to try hard, and after experiencing something harsher than ever before, and even with that, if there's a time when you are unable to match the task, will you be able to compensate by abandoning your humanity?" (Shiki) Once again.

With the same face, Shiki says this.

Looking at the eyes of Shiki, Amelia was able to tell...this is the last chance.

In the first place, she felt that if she is not in the Kuzunoha Company,

she would forget about Shiki in time.

Trying to escape from that rabble, she asked for employment in Kuzunoha Company.

Even though she said words akin to a confession, there was no answer.

Even so, Amelia felt like this was the last chance to connect her feelings.

“If with that...I am able to stay by your side, I won’t regret it.” (Amelia)

“...”

“I...” (Amelia)

“If I remember correctly, Lime said he wanted a subordinate. I was troubled because there’s the need for intelligence gathering abilities, magic, and high fighting power.” (Shiki) “I will do it!!” (Amelia)

“The time I have until introducing him would be, let’s see...probably by the time you graduate. Let me tell you this, it will as if the party fights until now were just playing around, you know? You will be resting at the Academy, and learn after school. You will probably be living a life like that.” (Shiki) “I don’t mind!!” (Amelia)

“Without lowering your grades, and continuing your part-time job, I will have you go through the training of an official employee.” (Shiki) “Of course!!” (Amelia)

“Understood. I will arrange the necessary. Make a desperate effort to have Waka-sama recognize you, Amelia.” (Shiki) At the end, he gently said Amelia’s name and made a smile as if he had been beaten by the persistence of his opponent.

(In the first place, he wasn’t against hiring Amelia. Even though I said all this, there’s actually not much problem in hiring her with how she is currently. What do I want with Amelia? At worst, if I were to do a breach of morals, just how much should I show and just how much should I involve myself? This is bad. Even though I am aware that I am cruel, maybe because I was originally a hyuman, there are times when I can’t be like Tomoe-dono and Mio-dono. Amelia is simply a stray cat that I

coincidentally found. It is an existence that even when stirred by others at times, it is not someone that can bring harm. And yet, am I feeling reluctant to relinquish it? It is someone that I haven't shown my real self, you know? I...) (Shiki) While holding questions within himself, Shiki felt that a part of him wished for this development, and was bewildered.



“Ara, Tomoe-san. What’s wrong? It is rare for you to come to the kitchen.”

“Don’t ‘what’s wrong?’ me. You are plotting something, right?” (Tomoe)
In the kitchen where Mio was endeavouring herself in, Tomoe appeared. Right now she was in the middle of preparing dinner.

“Plotting, you say. What are you talking about?” (Mio)

“Clearing out the people, I have come to ask you in this way. Don’t play dumb.” (Tomoe) Just like what Tomoe said, the preparation work that normally has a lot more people working in, only has Mio today.

There were actually people, but Tomoe slowly gave them work and had them leave. Right now, there’s only Mio remaining.

“Even if you say that, I just can’t understand what you mean.” (Mio)

“About accompanying Waka-ja yo.” (Tomoe)

The kitchen knife that moved nimbly, stopped.

Until now, Mio had been speaking with Tomoe without looking at her and only directing it to her presence, but she slowly turned around.

“About going together with Waka-sama to Limia Kingdom without letting Tomoe-san or Shiki, is it that-desu ka?” (Mio) “That’s right-ja. About you going, well, it is not like it is necessarily a no, but there’s one troublesome hero at Limia. I don’t know what you are thinking, but I will be going as well.” (Tomoe) “I refuse-desu wa.” (Mio)

“What authority do you have in saying that? I want you to tell me along with your scheme-ja no.” (Tomoe) “Hibiki isn’t even to fear. Isn’t Tomoe-

san just being overcautious?” (Mio)

“If we are just looking at the fighting power of her, it would be as you say. But the troublesome part of Hibiki is not that. That intuition and way of conduct, if we were to let her involve herself with Waka without proper supervision... I just can't overlook it.” (Tomoe) “I don't understand that intuition you are talking about. No matter what Hibiki learns of, just what would she be able to do about it-desu? In the first place, if she were truly sharp, I wouldn't even need to move out.” (Mio) At the latter part, Mio mutters it incredibly low as if talking to herself.

It seems like Tomoe was unable to hear that part.

“It is not about what she learns. What's troublesome is the chance of her teaching Waka something she has thought of. Looking at the chances, I can't say it is zero.” (Tomoe) “Even though Tomoe-san always goes without interfering, the moment Waka-sama is about to learn something that inconveniences you, you turn defensive-desu wa ne.” (Mio) “You, are you looking at me in that way?!” (Tomoe)

“Because, isn't that the truth? You have a lot of things you don't tell Waka-sama, right? You have also silenced me from telling him about me killing the individual that revived.” (Mio) “...There are a lot of things in this world that are premature to know, and things that are better not known.” (Tomoe) “This is something I learned recently but, it is about that merchant Rembrandt that Waka-sama likes. Wasn't he quite the merchant-sama in his younger times? Even though it is something that you should know because of your mind reading abilities, you didn't tell Waka-sama.” (Mio) “W-What good would come...from telling him? Wouldn't it only make Waka suffer? That's why I will tell him when he has grown enough to be able to take it. Don't you think it is okay to do that?” (Tomoe) “I just can't agree with that 'watching over is best' thinking of Tomoe-san.” (Mio) “Then what are you telling me to do-ja?” (Tomoe)

“That...I will be showing it in Limia. But it would be troublesome if you were there. Please rest for a bit. There's a lot of other work to do after all.” (Mio) “Is it okay to think that it has something to do with you giving a

similar equipment of Waka to that Rembrandt daughter? That troubled Waka a lot, you know?” (Tomoe) “That’s right. I have already received my scolding, and I have already received his forgiveness. Until now...I have not said anything about most of what Tomoe-san has done. Is Tomoe-san going to interpose in what I will do? Are you thinking that I will harm Waka-sama?” (Mio) The eyes of Mio shoot a dangerous light.

“That’s not it. I know of your deep affection and loyalty to Waka. You don’t even have a shred of a thought about harming him. What I am anxious about, is you going out of control-ja. Because of your deep affection to Waka, you view other people aside from Waka way too lightly. As long as Waka cares for the general trend of others, we should also accommodate to that as well. You should also be able to understand that too, right?” (Tomoe) While thinking that the words of Mio hit in a part that hurt, Tomoe responds.

“Yeah.” (Mio)

“That’s why I am saying that I will accompany you and do a follow-up.” (Tomoe)

“That’s why I am doing it-desu.” (Mio)

Their words weren’t in sync.

“What?” (Tomoe)

“The one that’s caring is Waka-sama. And yet, there are idiots that just don’t know that the match is already over. Why is it that there are people troubling Waka-sama’s heart one after the other?” (Mio) “...”

“That’s why I just want them to understand just what kind of person Waka-sama is, to those idiots and Hibiki as well. It is just that-desu.” (Mio) From the words of Mio, Tomoe understood that it was impossible to convince her and gave up.

She has known that Mio and Shiki have been mostly complying with what she said.

“...This is something you are doing when already knowing about the power of the priestess, right?” (Tomoe) With a power different from

magic, the priestess Chiya is able to see through something within the person. Tomoe was confirming this of Mio.

With the report of Lime, this has become evident. Shiki and Tomoe are currently thinking about a countermeasure to it.

“Of course, I know of it-desu wa.” (Mio)

“Knowing that, you want to accompany him alone, that’s what you are saying, right?” (Tomoe) “This time I won’t yield.” (Mio)

Saying that, she points her kitchen knife at Tomoe.

Without a single sign of joking.

“...Understood.” (Tomoe)

Without placing a hand on her katana, Tomoe lifted both of her hands and showed her intend to give up.

“You are unexpectedly obedient-desu wa ne. Even though I thought you would be a bit more persistent.” (Mio) “The reason that the preparations for the meal were a bit earlier than normal was because you were expecting something like this to ‘happen’, huh.” (Tomoe) “Yeah. I don’t want to delay the meal of Waka-sama, so I made sure that even with one match, it won’t happen.” (Mio) Once again, the sound of the kitchen knife hitting the chopping board was heard.

Of course, it is because Mio returned to her preparations.

“I understand that you don’t want to hurt Waka or make him suffer, but you know, that’s something I don’t want, and probably Shiki neither. No one is thinking about wanting to see him break or crumble.” (Tomoe)

“Yeah. I wouldn’t forgive someone like that after all.” (Mio)

“You said you won’t be yielding this time, but I will be using that, Mio.” (Tomoe) “...Eh?” (Mio)

“At least bring Lime with you. Even if he is like that, he is useful. He won’t be able to get in your way, and it is also useful as a pawn to use in that side, right?” (Tomoe) “But...” (Mio)

“I won’t be yielding-ja, Mio. Waka will also be able to comfortably travel

having one man alongside. Just as you wish, Shiki and I won't be going."
(Tomoe) "Waka-sama will..." (Mio)

"Please." (Tomoe)

"Fuh~, understood. I will accept Lime coming along. But it is also prohibited for Tomoe-san and Shiki to stealthily follow from behind, okay?" (Mio) "I wouldn't do something like that. Also, I don't know what the other side will do in the time you guys are in Limia, and I have asked Waka to avoid coming and going to Asora as much as he can. You will be able to do as you wish." (Tomoe) "I trust in you-desu wa." (Mio)

"..."

"There's no need for Waka-sama to care about the world to the point of collapsing. There's also no need to protect the town just because there have been complains of here and there. Every single one of them, there's a limit to being dense." (Mio) "...Don't overdo it, Mio." (Tomoe)

Makoto didn't know that Tomoe and Mio had this kind of conversation before heading to Limia.

Tomoe feared the irregular possibilities that might be born from the long time that Hibiki and Makoto have lived together.

Mio was angered by the world that surrounds Makoto.

And Shiki is more into his students than Makoto thinks of.

Without noticing the thoughts of his followers, Makoto, Mio, and Lime head to Limia Kingdom today.

Chapter 204: Unannounced Storm

The Kusunoha Company's representative is going to come to Limia Kingdom.

This is small news.

For a company that has its headquarters at a foreign country to go through the trouble of going to Limia to say its greetings is relatively rare, and for the many knights and nobles, it is a happening that isn't given much attention, or at least that's how it is supposed to be.

They took it as a simple merchant trying to get on their good sides, and the representative of the company in question was half with that intention.

The merchants that have stores in Limia have already asked for information about the Kusunoha Company from the Rotsgard Merchant Guild, and there were many nobles that were indifferent to it.

The Kusunoha Company currently doesn't have the intention of establishing in Limia, and in this time, they were simply going because the Limia royal family had wished for it. They heard that the Kusunoha Company doesn't have any big business plan prepared.

At most, in terms of movement, a part of the people that are interested in information are thinking about creating a connection with the Kusunoha Company in the time of their stay.

However, for a limited few, this matter held a big meaning.

From the Limia side, it is Prince Joshua and hero Hibiki. And there's also the Hopelace household.

The Limia King also has a relative interest in the Kusunoha Company and the representative Raidou.

In the side of Kusunoha Company, there's Raidou's follower, Mio who has something hidden within her.

For them, it was already clear that they will be meeting with an ulterior

motive of their own.

And then they arrived at the appointed day.

Raidou, Mio, and Lime; those three headed to Limia in a morning with good weather.

At the teleport formation managed by the Academy, Raidou's group was being seen off by the Kuzunoha Company members.

The teleportation to Limia's state border was prepared, and from there, a carriage travel was waiting for them.

"Waka, please be careful."

"Yeah, I will do my best, Tomoe. I won't be showing my face in Asora, so I will be leaving that part to you." (Makoto)

"Yes." (Tomoe)

"Waka-sama, I will be taking care of the Academy matters, so I am counting on you for the selection. I will make sure to always be ready to receive your thought transmission, so if there's anything that you need to consult about, don't hesitate to." (Shiki)

"I will probably rely on you a number of times. Thanks, Shiki." (Makoto)

While nodding, there was a slight hesitation in the state of Shiki.

He looked like he wanted to say something more, but in the end, he didn't say it.

"Please leave the store to us."

"I have perfectly gotten used to dealing with customers. I have obtained the skill [Devilish Clerk], so go ahead with the mood of being on board of a boat."

"Akua and Eris, I am counting on you." (Makoto)

"But well, if the souvenirs are going to be bananas, make sure the boat is big." (Eris)

"Well then, I will be going." (Makoto)

Ignoring the utterance of Eris, or more like, without paying attention to her words, Raidou followed Mio, and Lime and entered the building with the teleport formation.

“To think that he would use [Ignore] on me...What a high-class skill. I didn’t know Waka had learned such a skill.” (Eris)

“There’s no bananas in Limia, Eris.” (Aqua)

“...And compared to that, what an obvious retort. The level of Akua is low. It seems like there’s the need to go back to the basics with ‘what’s up with that?’.” (Eris)

The two Forest Onis that have gone to see them off had begun a friendly quarrel.

There were none who tried to stop it.

“Shiki, it seems like there’s something in your mind.” (Tomoe)

“...No.” (Shiki)

“Waka and Mio are not here, and I have something I want you to hear. Lend me your time.” (Tomoe)

Telling Akua and Eris to make it in time to open the store, Tomoe took Shiki and changed locations.

To an empty location in the Academy that is silent and is not being used.

“This place is fine. For these past few days you haven’t been acting like yourself. Shiki, at the time of the farewell as well, you looked like you had something in your mind, you know?” (Tomoe)

“...Is that so. It is true that I am busy, but I think I am as always though.” (Shiki)

“I feel like you are self-aware of it though. Also, the matter about Waka going with Mio to Limia, you accepted it way too easily.” (Tomoe)

“That was...uhm...Mio-dono persuaded me in a variety of ways and...” (Shiki)

“Physically?” (Tomoe)

“...No. Ah, I-I will leave it to your imagination.” (Shiki)

“In my side, I had a slight dispute with Mio, and I was a bit interested in your thoughts.” (Tomoe)

“My thoughts?” (Shiki)

Shiki returns the words of Tomoe as a question.

In the first place, Tomoe and Mio having friction was news to him.

“About how you think of Waka –no, that’s not it. What do you want Waka to become-ja?” (Tomoe)

“Waka-sama?” (Shiki)

“The reason of you acting weird might actually be because of that. It seemed like you are getting way too involved with the Rotsgard students after all.” (Tomoe)

“!! Something like that is...not true.” (Shiki)

Shiki was clearly shaken, and it was practically like saying ‘that’s true’.

“Especially what you did to that girl called Amelia. Depending on the reason, it is something that can be taken as a joke, you know?” (Tomoe)

“Why do you—?!” (Shiki)

“I coincidentally saw that girl, and within her head, it was completely filled in pink. She was truly happy, but the details were something that I can’t ignore. I didn’t expect you to be related to it.” (Tomoe)

“ ... ”

“Now that I think about it, there’s practically no commonness in what we wish for Waka. It is certain that there’s no ‘I want to cooperate with the Goddess and make this world a paradise to humans’, though. Even if there’s no antagonistic feelings towards Waka, within our group, there are times when we oppose each other, and I am beginning to think that it is a matter of course.” (Tomoe)

“That’s impossible. We have originated from the control pact, we are Waka-sama’s followers. There’s no way we would be able to do acts that

would go against our master.” (Shiki)

“You telling those things to that girl as if they were the words of Waka, depending on the way it is taken, that can be considered a betrayal to Waka. There’s no absolutes. Even if we don’t go against Waka, there’s plenty possibility that we oppose each other, right?” (Tomoe)

“!! I wouldn’t do something like betraying Waka-sama! That was something I did while thinking of the good of that girl and Waka-sama and...” (Shiki)

“But that manner of speech, didn’t Amelia certainly get a bad impression of Waka?” (Tomoe)

It is certainly true that Shiki had done a severe criticism to Amelia as words of Raidou.

At that time, he took the position of soothing Amelia.

That could be taken as an act of betrayal to Raidou.

“Tomoe-dono, that’s not it. Until then, I had already given plenty enough praise to her. In a sense, my role is to give self-confidence. That’s why, to play the bad guy in only that moment would go against the class policy that Waka-sama had set before.” (Shiki)

“But in the first place, those were not the words of Waka, right? It is true that you have lied-ja. That fact doesn’t change, you know?” (Tomoe)

“The evaluation that Waka-sama gave to Amelia was way too harsh for Amelia at that moment. It is true that I falsified it, but for the one receiving the lessons, there’s something harsher than a severe criticism. And so, I decided to tell her the conclusion of my own analysis of her faults as if they were Waka-sama’s words.” (Shiki)

“...How did Waka evaluate her?” (Tomoe)

“Normal, it seems. Things like she asks a lot, a mobile professor, she talks a lot. Anyways, it seems like he didn’t have much interest in her and there wasn’t much impression of her.” (Shiki)

“ ... ”

“Waka-sama has placed notations on the students depending on their special traits and has an understanding on them, but in principle, he sees the students as people to instruct techniques, and doesn’t hold further interest or emotions than that. Waka-sama and them are close in age, and it is certainly true that at first, he said that he would draw a line, but...I thought that in time it would grow vague. However, that didn’t happen at all.” (Shiki)

Shiki opened up.

He spoke of the emotions that took shape at that time he was talking to Makoto about the students’ evaluation and their employment.

“Even so, it didn’t turn into something like a master-disciple relationship, and he has been acting as a simple teacher doing his job. I thought that even if Waka-sama doesn’t go too far with Jin, Amelia, and the others, they would be able to reach a relationship of teacher and student close to that of friendship...no, I began to wish for that to happen.” (Shiki)

“Teacher and student huh.” (Tomoe)

“Do you understand, Tomoe-dono? The most painful thing for the people that earnestly want to learn from their respected teacher. It is...not criticism; it is unconcern. Not being interested in them, and being dealt with in the same way as the others. That’s how it is. Or at least, that’s how I think it is.” (Shiki)

“Is this something that you can tell because you were a hyuman before being a Lich and had been in the path of research? I feel like you are reading into it a bit too much though.” (Tomoe)

“I don’t know. But after obtaining the body of a hyuman again and being in a learning environment once more, it is the truth that I...have grown attached to my students.” (Shiki)

“Good grief, that was a miscalculation. Isn’t that the total opposite then?” (Tomoe)

“...Tomoe-dono?” (Shiki)

“And so, you showed a severe criticism that would be ‘similar’ to that of Waka that has been playing the bad guy, have Amelia think that Waka has interest in her, and that he has been properly analysing her ability. You are saying that you wanted that girl to think in that way?” (Tomoe)

“...Yes.” (Shiki)

Shiki nods at the words of Tomoe.

Shiki was bothered by what Tomoe said of ‘opposite’, but he decided to first affirm her words.

“And so, you planted at the bottom of her heart that in her current state she would die if she were to enter our place, and you showed her your feelings of wanting to avoid that.” (Tomoe)

“No, that’s not it.” (Shiki)

“It is. What a troublesome man-ja na, to think that you haven’t noticed it.” (Tomoe)

“...”

“In the first place, Waka has no interest in Amelia, so if that woman wants to work, it would be okay to just have her stay somewhere close to you and the problem would be solved.” (Tomoe)

“But then it would end up as Amelia dying a pointless death... Waka-sama will probably...not give her a special treatment.” (Shiki)

“True. But what’s wrong about dying pointlessly? Isn’t it just one woman, who doesn’t know her place, dying?” (Tomoe)

“Wha...” (Shiki)

“This is something that you would have said before heading to Rotsgard. That was my miscalculation. Seriously...the reason why you showed antipathy towards my words just now was because you are holding the lives of all your students dearly, or maybe just that one girl-ja ro ga.” (Tomoe)

“?!! I feel that much towards those kids?” (Shiki)

With a face as if receiving a shock, Shiki mutters as if groaning.

In a pretty weak voice.

“Good grief, the men at our place are all blockheads in the important parts. It makes me think that the consistent denseness of Waka is better.”
(Tomoe)

Tomoe mutters in a truly amazed manner.

“I am amazed that everything was right on the mark. In that case, your attitude towards Waka just now was mostly you wanting to say a complain because he so easily threw all the matters of the students to you?”
(Tomoe)

“To make a complain to Waka-sama, there’s no way!! But, it is certainly true. I did think about why he didn’t say a single thing about Jin and the others. Those kids straightforwardly follow mine and Waka-sama’s lecture. In that case, we should also show our sincerity—” (Shiki)

The words of Shiki were stopped by Tomoe who had gotten closer.

“Shiki.” (Tomoe)

“...What is it?” (Shiki)

“Do you remember me saying ‘opposite’?” (Tomoe)

“Y-Yes.” (Shiki)

“You see, I thought that when Waka becomes like you, I wanted you to do a follow-up so that Waka doesn’t go too far. That’s why I agreed in you accompanying him to Rotsgard.” (Tomoe)

“Waka-sama...becoming like me?” (Shiki)

“That’s right-ja. If it is you, I thought that it wouldn’t become that way-ja. But it seems I have splendidly missed.” (Tomoe)

In a distance where their faces were practically touching, Tomoe spoke to Shiki with an extremely low voice.

It was a low volume, but it was a voice that had a silent pressure.

“That’s why it is the ‘opposite’ huh. I got into it, and Waka-sama

remained unchanged.” (Shiki)

“That’s right-ja.” (Tomoe)

“But why was it me?” (Shiki)

“...You are being way too stupid-ja na, Shiki. You are not telling me that you don’t remember what you did before becoming Waka’s follower, right? Even if you obtain the body of a hyuman, your past doesn’t disappear, you know? Can’t you remember? What you did as a Lich to the people in the whole world.” (Tomoe)

“!!”

“Hyumans, demi-humans, beasts; just how many lives did you steal for the sake of your researches? Just how many were sacrificed for experiments that in the end didn’t show the results you wanted?” (Tomoe)

It was just as Tomoe said.

And the knowledge of those times were related to the last resort Shiki had with Amelia.

There’s not enough data, is what Shiki said, but in truth, Shiki has experience in tampering hyumans. If Amelia really doesn’t have enough power and can’t reach the objective, Shiki intended to just strengthen her safely to that line with the knowledge he had.

To forget the roots of that knowledge is truly something strange.

“Uh...” (Shiki)

“If you were in a learning environment in the past and Rotsgard had a similar atmosphere, and there are talented students who are diligently learning, something of your long past might have resurfaced. But it is impossible to forget what happened in between-ja yo.” (Tomoe)

“That’s...I haven’t forgotten about it though.” (Shiki)

“Then you should understand why I gave you that role even without me saying everything, right? What color are those hands of yours? Are those the hands of someone that can pat the head of his students?” (Tomoe)

“ ... ”

Being told that, Shiki lowers his gaze and looks at both of his hands.

He understood plenty what Tomoe was trying to tell him.

“...Fuuh. Well, if I was talking with Mio, she would innocently say: ‘They are beautiful though, is there a problem?’, but it is different with you.”
(Tomoe)

“True...it is true that I was way too festive. It seems like I have felt something no less than attachment towards the students.” (Shiki)

Tomoe takes distance, and the condemning atmosphere disappeared.

Placing Mio as an example, she melted the tension of Shiki.

“I was able to read an approximate of what you wish from Waka. You want to cancel the ‘hyuman discrimination’ that Waka has, right?”
(Tomoe)

“...Yes. So Tomoe-dono also noticed it huh.” (Shiki)

Shiki affirms the words of Tomoe.

Discrimination.

It is a word that doesn’t fit Makoto that much.

“Well, yeah. Waka has declared that he won’t discriminate demi-humans and he is putting it in practice, but he is discriminating practically all the hyumans. The direct reason might be because of the idiots that went crazy in Asora though. But he has Rembrandt who he has been socializing with before that.” (Tomoe)

“Yes, he has already closed his heart and creating a clear line, and on top of that, it seems like he is keeping his speech and conduct in check. There have been several times when he has remained as a spectator in Rotsgard ‘because they are hyumans’. That part has become a plus appraisal for Rona.” (Shiki)

“It is troublesome because he is doing it unconsciously-ja na. It is certainly true that I want to reduce that part of his as well-ja.” (Tomoe)

“As I thought, it is really unconsciously. Waka-sama is normally against the very word of discrimination after all.” (Shiki)

“That’s the kind of education he was given. That it is bad to change the way of seeing someone because of the color of their body, their different traits, or traits that they are missing.” (Tomoe)

“What a kind teaching.” (Shiki)

“Yeah. But the matter with Waka and the humans is complicated. There’s the matter with the Goddess as well, and in the first place, the humans in this world are blessed with position and power. There’s no few amount of people that would think it is fine for humans to face some pain after being in the position of other demi-humans. Even if we explain it normally to Waka, it will probably serve only to scratch the surface.” (Tomoe)

“It is certainly true that in this world, human discrimination is not a word I have heard.” (Shiki)

“In that point, I am not sure about it, but I am slightly expecting something from Hibiki. They are both Japanese, and if it is that girl, there’s the chance that she will be able to change the will of Waka properly. Well, she will definitely do something unnecessary, so I will have Mio –no, Lime work as a suspension though.” (Tomoe)

“In my perspective, that girl is like strong medicine that’s close to being a gamble.” (Shiki)

“I already know that it is a gamble. But I...am honestly unsure if what I have done for Waka until now has been good or bad.” (Tomoe)

“...Different from me, Tomoe-dono has been acting for the sake of Waka-sama. From what I have seen, you are protecting that person as if you were connected by blood.” (Shiki)

Shiki speaks out his true feelings.

Tomoe was directing a different emotion from that of serving the man she loves, towards Makoto. Shiki thought that way.

It was a deep affection, like that of a brother and sister with a big difference in age.

What was troubling Tomoe, surprised Shiki.

“But since the time Waka came to this world, he has certainly been walking a path different from those other kids that were living peacefully as well. If we just say that it is because of how they were raised, the talk would be over, but I have been wondering if there was a better method, that maybe I have only been covering the eyes of Waka. The insecurity is killing me.” (Tomoe)

“This is not a world where we can live by not killing anyone, not hurting, or causing any problems. Waka-sama touching common sense and changing in some way in this new world is something that’s unavoidable. Of course, I don’t think it is the fault of anyone.” (Shiki)

“Waka is...doing his best. Even though he was a person that thought of only looking at the big world, he has been forcefully pushed to the stage, and he is now looking for peace in that space. Even though he was originally not a person who had the strength to swim in that ocean-like world.” (Tomoe)

“...”

“Shiki, I want Waka to have peace in his heart, and as long as his life lasts, I want to keep this connection without throwing it away. Even when that time comes, I don’t want to be abandoned.” (Tomoe)

“That time?” (Shiki)

“But Mio is different. That girl, if it’s the decision of Waka, she can accept anything. Only that girl has a principle that’s completely different from us both. As followers of Waka, we are all in the same position, and in terms of our wishes, we all have different positions.” (Tomoe)

“Tomoe-dono...” (Shiki)

“In the demon race country, Waka achieved Creation. Waka has definitely done a step towards his confrontation with the Goddess, and he is approaching the time when he has to decide on what will happen after.”

(Tomoe)

“At that time, it might be the time to do our farewells?” (Shiki)

“Compared to the heroes, Waka clearly has more attachment to his world. There’s the chance-ja. Even in Asora, Waka is not trying to hold much state power as a ruler. In other words, I began to think that maybe he has no attachment to it, and it just doesn’t end. Japan or us, which one is more important to Waka—” (Tomoe)

“Then let’s search for it.” (Shiki)

Tomoe’s words were cut by Shiki this time.

“Search? Not ask?” (Tomoe)

“That’s right. There’s no need to ask for Waka-sama’s wish, you can easily tell what it is after all.” (Shiki)

“What?” (Tomoe)

“You are thinking about it way too deeply, Tomoe-dono. If it’s Waka-sama, he will definitely keep in touch with Asora, and on top of that, he would say that he wants to return to his world while maintaining how things are.” (Shiki)

“...Are you an idiot? It is because I haven’t found that method that I am being anxious about the final choice.” (Tomoe)

“Put more power into it. People like Root-dono, the living beings that were originally in Asora, and there’s also the Gods from another world that have brought their blessings. Since it is for this, isn’t it fine to just throw away your shame and reputation to gather information from the many powers out there?” (Shiki)

“Without caring about one’s appearance huh.” (Tomoe)

“Yeah. Luckily, Kuzunoha Company has a lot of sells in medicine, there’s also the Rembrandt company that can obtain highly fresh information, and we can also expect something from the knowledge of the demon race. I think it is too fast to give up.” (Shiki)

“...Fumu. Now that I think about it, moving from worlds might be a

bigger obstacle than the Goddess. It is easy to tell the wish of Waka huh. It is just as you say, Shiki.” (Tomoe)

“Also, if the information of the Goddess side is slightly old, we can get our hands on it.” (Shiki)

“Hoh~.” (Tomoe)

Tomoe shows interest at the words of Shiki who has an evil smile on his face.

“A while ago, I got acquainted with a cow and a bird that are connected to that side you see. Also, I know clearly of the whereabouts of another one in Lorel, kukuku.” (Shiki)

“...I see. There’s a mountain of things to do in the time that Waka’s not here huh. Fufufu.” (Tomoe)

The sinister design that was being exchanged in this ruins.

It has been a while since Tomoe has laughed so brightly.

“By the way, I wonder what Mio-dono is thinking regarding the countermeasures for that priestess. Even though we are unable to find a conclusive method here.” (Shiki)

“Who knows. We are talking about her, so she probably has some odd plan-ja. It seemed like she was using the head that she rarely uses after all.” (Tomoe)



Lime Latte was holding his head.

It wasn’t because of how uncomfortable it was when they were lodged in the Hopelace territory yesterday.

And it wasn’t because of the high-class assassins that crept into our place that night either.

It is certainly true that in terms of distance, the Hopelace territory is a weird place to be staying in, and they said that the feudal lord was at the capital and was unable to greet the Kuzunoha Company. Those were

conditions that made one question what was the reason for lodging there.

The residents there were mainly unable to hide their emotions in their gaze, a lot of the children were facing their way as if cursing them to death, and the adults had cold eyes as they laughed.

It definitely wasn't a place to rest well.

Makoto said that 'they are probably still suffering since something like that happened in the Academy to the second son of the feudal lord', but he didn't think that they were holding a grudge even now and didn't care about it.

If speaking of Mio, she slaughtered all the assassins and for some reason is now all smiles.

With a normal spirit, you would normally collapse in this situation, but Lime is also a member of the Kuzunoha Company. He had already expected this, and it is something that can be easily washed away with a bottle of sake.

Then why is he holding his head?

The reason is simple.

Because of a scream and the light sound of something falling.

In the carriage that's still on its way to the capital, they had passed through the gate just like that and were advancing through the streets of the capital.

The gazes of the residents were divided between those with interest and those that didn't, the former gazes were somewhat good willed.

Until this point, it was good.

The problem is after the carriage stopped at a place close to the castle, Lime had confirmed several times beforehand something with Mio.

He asked 'are your countermeasures to the priestess okay?', and he also asked if those countermeasures were also applied to Boss.

She nodded with complete confidence.

Not only that, she said 'I have made perfect countermeasures, so it is okay for Waka-sama to just maintain his Magic Armor in concealment as always-desu wa'.

For some reason, a bit of uneasiness was left, but even so, it is something that was said by the person that stands side by side with Tomoe as matchless people of the Kuzunoha Company.

Lime swallowed his own uneasiness.

And then...

Right after Lime got off first and confirmed the lineup of the people and their numbers...Mio had gotten off the carriage gracefully.

That kimono girl that had makeup applied, attracted the gazes of many, and even when she is similar to Hibiki, she was a different type of beauty that created gasps.

Leaving aside one person.

Priestess Chiya.

Only she was not fascinated by Mio or happy about her reunion, she placed her hands on her mouth and made a scream, and with eyes that couldn't be opened any wider, she was trembling heavily.

And that's when a thought surfaced in Lime's mind: 'this is bad'.

When he looks at Mio worried about the countermeasures not working, Mio was happily looking at the state of Chiya.

'This is bad, Tomoe-neesan', that's what Lime thought from the bottom of his heart.

For a second, he thought about stopping Raidou who was going to come next, but it didn't go well.

In the end, Raidou got off last.

He was the only one that looked nervous from the people that were in the group.

From the three, the one that was the most nervous was Raidou, is what

Lime was sure of.

Chiya who was looking at the unenergetic man, made a dubious expression for several seconds.

After that, she made an incredibly high-pitched scream, lost her balance, and then fainted.

Raidou was taken aback by the state of Chiya and was agitated by it.

And within the confused surroundings, Lime was holding his head.

Looking at the red lips of Mio that were bend upwards, he felt an additional wringing sensation from his stomach.

(What kind of punishment is this? Is it because of the matter in Lorel? That's too much, Anee-san~.) (Lime)

The harsh days in Limia have been made certain.

Lime was looking at the sky, placing his right hand at his forehead.

The Kuzunoha Company's party has arrived at the Limia capital.

Mio: Just as planned-desu wa.

Lime: But you had no plan at all!

Mio: EXACTLY.

Chapter 205: At the side of the sleeping priestess

“...Right. I didn’t meet the Emperor in Gritonia, but I have already met the King of Limia...so I should have known.”

After returning to the guest room that was given to us, a sigh and a reflection leaked out.

My head was heavy as if something was weighing down on it.

It was a sensation as if I had been studying for a long period of time, and I stopped my concentration for a bit.

We did an audience with the Limia king, and had a talk with nobles(that were probably influential).

The moment we came to this country, I was already prepared to have talks with nobles, but in Gritonia, the only ones I met were the princess and the hero, so at a corner of my mind, I thought that maybe I won’t be meeting the king.

It seems like with the excuse of having saved them at Rotsgard, they began an audience as their thanks.

Personally, I wanted to go visit the priestess-san that had suddenly collapsed, but in that part, they politely refused.

I was bothered by it, but I had no choice but to ask Mio and Lime grasp her state.

Thanks to my experience in the audience with the Demon Lord, I was somehow able to overcome it, but the number of nobles that came to talk later were more than I expected, and it made me abnormally tired.

I spoke a bit with prince Joshua, and after that, I thought that Hibiki-senpai had various things to talk about as well, but to my surprise, she didn’t show up.

And there’s also the Hopelace household.

The feudal lord said that he would be waiting for me in the capital, but I had a bad feeling about actually meeting him.

He was calm and told me about the opinions of other nobles, so in the surface, he had a cooperative atmosphere, but...

At times, he directed unpleasant eyes at me.

That's what I felt.

I don't think it was my imagination, and I felt like the nobles that were close to him also directed a good amount of those gazes.

There were several times when I felt like they were keeping each other in check, and it might be just as the rumors say that the Limia nobles are ridden in political strifes.

For now, in the talks of today, there was not a single topic about having the Kuzunoha Company placing a store.

There's plenty possibility that in the Merchant Guild of this country and the nobles there has already been some sort of talk between them. This is the guess of Lime, but I think that's correct.

"Good work, Waka-sama." (Mio)

"Good work, Boss." (Lime)

Mio and Lime; the two of them were in the room and welcomed me.

"I am back~. Senpai was not there, but the talk with the king and the nobles was incredibly tiring." (Makoto) "About the priestess that Waka-sama was worried about, it seems like she saw an hallucination because of overwork." (Mio) "Yeah, right now there's nothing wrong and is calmly sleeping." (Lime) "So she was tired to the point of seeing hallucinations...a girl as small as that... Senpai must be worried as well." (Makoto) I feel like being in the hero party of the Limia Kingdom is a very successful career, but is it an exhausting job?

It seems like Senpai is standing at the frontlines in the war with the demon race, so maybe it is a given.

In this world, kids are working as if it was natural after all.

“Also, a messenger came and said that prince Joshua is waiting for you. It is not urgent, so after you have made your arrangements, he wanted you to tell the people that are at the corridor.” (Lime) “...Hey Mio.” (Makoto)

“What is it-desu ka?” (Mio)

“About the priestess-san, I feel like she collapsed when she saw you and I though. You didn’t do anything, right?” (Makoto) “I haven’t done anything-desu wa. In the first place, from all those people, she was the only one that ended up like that, you know? Even if it is me, I wouldn’t go out of my way to target my spell at a small girl.” (Mio) “...Right, sorry.” (Makoto)

“It is not something to apologize for. In the first place...” (Mio)

“Hm?” (Makoto)

“Waka-sama, Lime, and I haven’t done anything, so the reason should be on the other side. If that girl was trying to do something to us and ended up in that way, even if she is a girl, it just means she got her just desserts. Whatever the case, it is not something that merits Waka-sama to be troubled over.” (Makoto) Mio was laughing gently.

When she is with Tomoe and I, she normally acts emotionally, so this is unusual.

She seems to have a lot of composure, and how to say it, she looks calm.

I felt that in this journey I would be depending on Lime, but Mio’s beginning to look like a dependable person.

The Arkes show remarkable growth, but maybe Mio is like that as well.

I don’t think there will be that many complicated talks and decisions in Limia, but if that time comes, I am happy that there are two people I can rely on.

“That girl might have done something, huh. She is a priestess-san, so does she have a special sense or something, Lime?” (Makoto)

“Somewhat... Uhm...I think she is proficient at seeing the essence of someone when she sees them.” (Lime) “Essence... more mysterious

sounding stuff. From what I saw in her gaze, she didn't look like she saw my Magic Armor, so is it the type that sees things that other people don't?" (Makoto) "...Yeh." (Lime)

"Maybe I should try asking her when I visit her. It would be bad to make the Prince-sama wait, so I will be leaving soon. Ah, there's no need to stay house-sitting. It is fine if you just return by evening." (Makoto) "If that's the case, Waka-sama, I will go meet Hibiki-desu wa. I will be asking about the visit to the priestess in detail." (Mio) "Mio alone?" (Makoto)

Senpai and Mio.

Even if we are inside the castle, it makes me slightly uneasy.

"Then I will be taking Lime with me. It seems like there was a period of time when he was with Hibiki's group in Lorel after all. Is it okay? We haven't confirmed if it's okay to go outside, so if possible, it would be better to receive permission for it first, and it would be better to take care of the business that can be done within the castle." (Mio) "...Yeah, I am counting on you." (Makoto)

What with this? She is really reliable.

Did Mio evolve?

There was no notice of it.

It is true that we haven't confirmed if it's okay to leave outside.

This is bad.

I was thinking that it would be okay since those two can easily go outside without being discovered by the people of the castle.

It should be better to receive permission for going outside in terms of order huh.

I let it slip by.

"Go do it." (Makoto)

"Yeah, I will." (Mio)

I still had a sliver of uneasiness in my head, but I leave the room to head

to where prince Joshua is, and tell the guards that were standing there about my intentions.



“Well then, let’s go meet Hibiki, Lime.” (Mio)

“Nee-san.” (Lime)

“...What is it?” (Mio)

“What did you do to Chiya? What did you show her?” (Lime)

Lime made up his mind and asked, and Mio who had a gentle smile, narrowed her eyes slightly.

“I didn’t do anything. Nothing at all.” (Mio)

“I reported Tomoe-neesan about the priestess’ eyes. Boss didn’t seem like he knew, but Nee-san should have known, right?” (Lime) “Yeah.” (Mio)

“‘Yeah’, you say?! Don’t tell me, you intentionally...” (Lime)

“Waka-sama isn’t that good at expressing himself without words after all. Also...even if they learn of my identity, it will only deepen their understanding of Waka-sama. There’s no problem at all-desu yo.” (Mio) “I-Identity...is it? Don’t tell me you are like Tomoe-neesan, a Superior Dragon?” (Lime) Cold sweat ran down the face of Lime.

It wasn’t pleasant sweat.

When he was involved with Root and learned of his direct superior Tomoe’s identity, he was proud that he didn’t lose consciousness at that moment.

It was a situation that wouldn’t be strange if he did after all.

“Fufufu, that’s not it, but it is something similar-desu wa. Also, it is fine to just ask Hibiki about what that girl saw. I don’t know what she saw either after all.” (Mio) “Just what’s Boss, seriously.” (Lime)

Lime began to get interested in what Chiya saw in Raidou and Mio.

Just how will she express what she saw with those abstract words of

hers.

“Waka-sama is a gentleman that’s like a cat basking on the sun. With no evil and hostility. That’s only if he is not touched or woken up because of their own convenience, though.” (Mio) “The reaction of Chiya didn’t seem like she saw a cute cat though. Definitely.” (Lime) “Then she must have had a stupid expectation. Ah~, I don’t know what power it is, but it would be convenient if all the humans had that kind of power.” (Mio) The gentleness disappeared, and Mio was now showing a smile that made one feel dreadfulness.

“W-Well then, I will contact Hibiki.” (Lime)

“No need. You know where she is, right?” (Mio)

“Eh...yes. I have the information of Hibiki in this, so I can tell.” (Lime)
Saying this, Lime points at the katana at his waist.

Lime had received a katana exclusive for him from Makoto via Tomoe, that has been customized with a variety of abilities.

That’s one of the reasons why he is able to tell the location of Hibiki without the need of investigating.

Lime explains the location of Hibiki to Mio.

It seems like Hibiki is currently in the middle of nursing Chiya.

“This is convenient. Well then, we are going. Let’s go.” (Mio)

“So suddenly?! We should at least send a thought transmission to—”
(Lime) “Ara. For a person that we have trained, given a weapon, repaired it, and even gave her the credit of several achievements, there’s no need to be reserved-desu wa.” (Mio) “...That’s...it might be true but...” (Lime)

What Mio had listed was all true.

When lining it up again, Lime felt that they have done quite a lot for her.

“I will have Hibiki learn of Waka-sama in the time of our stay. By force, that is.” (Mio) “Learn of...Boss.” (Lime)

Lime felt something ominous from those words.

His instincts were telling him that it was dangerous.

“Right, first of all, maybe I should have her accompany him when delivering that.” (Mio) Mio glances at the bag that is lying down at a corner of the room.

“...I have not heard of the details, but if I remember correctly, it is the egg of a dragon, right?” (Lime) “Yeah, it seems like it is the Waterfall dragon-desu” (Mio)

“I see, the Waterfall dragon, is it.” (Lime)

Lime definitely didn't understand the meaning of it.

“It is a peace-fool dragon that was defeated by a mere dragon killer, but I will have it be useful.” (Mio) “...Water fall, Waterfall...dragon...Dragon killer? Hah? Haaah?!” (Lime)

“Hmph~, so it is here. The room where the priestess is sleeping.” (Mio) Lime was finally able to digest the words of Mio, but he was in the middle of showing several emotions by voicing them out.

Mio had nonchalantly teleported.

It is not the medical room.

It's the private rooms.

The cleaning was well done, but it was a room that didn't seem to be used that often.

At a part of that place, there was some sort of religious tool, and one could guess that it is the room of a priest.

“Who's there?!”

“Hibiki, it is me. It seems like you weren't present at the time of the audience. Waka-sama was worried, for a variety of reasons.” (Mio) “Mio...-san. And Lime too. I didn't invite you, and you didn't knock either but, what's going on?” (Hibiki) “It hasn't been long enough to say 'it's been a long while', but well, I am glad to see that you are somewhat well, Hibiki. Sorry for coming so suddenly.” (Lime) “Sorry, you say. Lime, you...” (Hibiki)

“Just how much do you think you owe us, lady? Wash away something as trivial as this without blaming.” (Mio) “Fuh~. When you bring that, I can’t say anything.” (Hibiki)

In the room of the priestess, the hero Hibiki was there.

The priestess Chiya was lying on the luxurious bed that has a pavilion.

In that big bed, there was only one small bulge.

“It seems like the priestess still hasn’t woken up. Waka-sama was worried about her as well. He said that he wanted to visit her later, so can you please make the time?” (Mio) “Misumi-kun? But that’s...” (Hibiki)

“He seemed to be worried that maybe he did something to her. Even though your side was the one that did something though.” (Mio) “...I see. So you heard it from Lime.” (Hibiki)

Lime takes the gaze of Hibiki directly.

He hasn’t promised to not say it or to keep it a secret, so there’s no room to blame him, and when thinking about their relationship, he is someone that she owes a lot to.

When there’s nothing to be ashamed for, it is natural to show a confident attitude.

“It is my job after all.” (Lime)

“Right. I won’t blame you for that.” (Hibiki)

“Also, didn’t you think that we would be coming with a countermeasure for that?” (Lime) “...Yes. You know of the eyes of Chiya, so I wasn’t expecting much.” (Hibiki) Slight regret was shown in the eyes of Hibiki.

“Now then, I wonder what this girl saw~. I am looking forward to hearing it.” (Mio) “You didn’t make a countermeasure?” (Hibiki)

“There was nothing you can see that could trouble us after all. I only thought of it as getting my fortune told for free-desu wa.” (Mio) Mio says this nonchalantly.

“How sturdy spirited, as always. It is true that I thought you would act

more cautiously.” (Hibiki) “Fufufufu, Hibiki says quite the amusing things—desu wa ne. Ara...” (Mio) Seeing the expression of Hibiki clouding slightly, Mio shows a wondering expression.

“You wanted to know about Waka-sama and us, right? Then be happier. Thanks to the priestess, you have obtained valuable information, didn’t you?” (Mio) “Until now, Chiya-chan has seen a variety of people, but she didn’t lose herself as much as now. It might be valuable information, but because my forecast was naive, I have made her experience something painful. I can’t be happy.” (Hibiki) “I thought that you had become quite skilled at conducting yourself, but it seems like you are soft-hearted when it comes to your comrades, as always. How lukewarm.” (Hibiki) “Just this one part, I feel like it is something that I can’t throw away until the last moment. But Mio-san, you call it lukewarm, but it looked like Misumi-kun was also quite soft-hearted towards Mio-san and the others though?” (Hibiki) She didn’t say that won’t be able to throw it away, but she objected to Mio’s words, and brings out the subject of Makoto.

It is true that Makoto treats her as an equal, or more like, family.

Hibiki who thinks that if they are talking about soft-hearted, he is one too.

“The standpoint is different. When it is an action befitting of one’s stature, it can’t be called soft-hearted. For Waka-sama, it is a conduct that he has surplus to do, but for you, you are just pointlessly tiptoeing.” (Mio) “You are going so far as saying that. Can I hear your basis?” (Hibiki) “That’s something you yourself should learn.” (Mio)

“...Eh?” (Hibiki)

“Lime and I won’t get in the way. Waka-sama wants to go to some lake in Limia because of a job he has been asked to do. Since you have the chance, how about you go guide him? Right, Waka-sama and you are ‘fellow countrymen’, so go together alone.” (Mio) “?!!” (Hibiki)

“Nee-san...” (Lime)

“Lime, you keep your mouth shut. How about it, Hibiki? If you say you are going to guide Waka-sama by yourself, I think it will be fine to clear all

the debts until now.” (Mio) “...It will depend on the place that he wants to go, but in my side, I can make the time. In the first place, I was thinking about having a long talk with Misumi-kun.” (Hibiki) The affirming words of Hibiki made the brows of Lime crease.

(And yet, the reason why they didn't establish a place to talk immediately...was because they placed the talk with the nobles first, to gather information and manipulate the impressions huh. The chances that a number of the nobles asked something of Hibiki are high, and if Hibiki meets with Boss after he has gone through uncomfortable talks, with the positions of Boss and Hibiki... The nursing might have been by chance, but it turned into a good excuse for us. Mio-neesan, Hibiki is not lukewarm. Something that can't be thrown away until the last moment, is something that can be considered will be thrown away when that moment comes, after all. If you are going to leave Boss and Hibiki alone...I should at least make it possible to grasp the situation. Tomoe-neesan was also bothered by it after all.) (Lime) “I have set up the table this much, so Hibiki should do something to make sure Waka-sama is able to go to the place he wants to go. No matter where Waka-sama wants to go, you who are a hero, is accompanying him, so it should be easy to convince the people around, right?” (Mio) “He is a guest that was invited by the Limia Kingdom, but he is only one merchant. There's places that can't be entered so...” (Hibiki) “...Hibiki, Waka-sama was called here to express their gratitude for saving your king and prince, you know? Something like public stance, I actually don't care about those. If you are going to bring out conditions after I have prepared this much—” (Mio) “Hibiki, those are not bad conditions, right? Boss is not someone that would cause troubles, and since you are an acquaintance of his, you should know, right?” (Lime) Lime cuts in.

Because he could somewhat guess what Mio was about to say after that.

Those words would have been way too careless and should not be said. While feeling slightly agitated, he composedly coped with it.

“...Understood. Today would be impossible, so it will be for tomorrow or the day after. I will match the necessity of Misumi-kun, and guide him. It

will be only me and Misumi-kun, okay?” (Hibiki) She confirms with Mio, or more like, she was pushing her desire.

From Hibiki’s impression, Mio hates when other girls approach Makoto.

Even so, Mio was currently proposing them to be in a situation where they are alone.

It would be strange not to suspect anything behind that.

“Of course-desu wa. Waka-sama has been tired lately, so please have him relax. I am leaving it to you, Hibiki.” (Mio) “Understood. I will do what I can. The girl here is still resting so...” (Hibiki) “Of course, we have finished our business. Let’s return, Lime. Ah, Hibiki, this is a request with no debt involved. What the priestess saw, please do tell me as well. I am really interested in it after all.” (Mio) “Got it, Nee-san.” (Lime)

“I have heard it, but I can’t promise anything.” (Hibiki)

Hibiki looks at the place where those two blended and disappeared in the darkness, with a serious expression.

She is scheming something.

She was able to tell at least this much.

She hasn’t told anyone about Makoto who is calling himself Raidou, but she has gotten one lead, and it is true that Hibiki wants information of them to the point of desperation.

But the table has been prepared way too much.

Also, the reaction of Chiya was irregular.

“...Just what in the world did Chiya see? It bothers me as well. If possible, I want to hear about it before guiding Misumi-kun, but...they did tell me that it is best to wait for her to wake up naturally after all...” (Hibiki) Looking at Chiya sleeping, Hibiki makes a small sigh.

The bad feeling doesn’t disappear.

The chill that has been wrapping around her neck since the moment Chiya collapsed, worried Hibiki.

Lime who had returned to their guest room, made a tired expression in front of Mio.

His appearance of bending his back was pitiful.

“Please spare me, Nee-san. At that rate, Nee-san, you would have said that you would be turning the capital into ashes to none other than Hibiki, right?” (Lime) “I was slightly...peeved. It would have been fine to just obediently accept the preparations, but she had to go and try to be all sly. As expected, it would have been bad to say that I would be erasing the capital. You have saved me, Lime. I was about to trouble Waka-sama.” (Mio) “Also, isn’t it bad to leave Hibiki and Boss alone? I have been asked by Tomoe-neesan to—” (Lime) “Lime.” (Mio)

“Yes, what is it?” (Lime)

“There’s no problem.” (Mio)

An assertion.

“...There’s none?” (Lime)

“Yeah, none at all.” (Mio)

“Under...stood.” (Lime)

(No...choice. I will have to do it stealthily.) (Lime)

Left with no other choice, Lime began to think of a way to check on the state of those two from the shadows.

But...

“If you do something like keep those two in check... I will do something interesting, Lime. Something incredibly interesting.” (Mio) “...”

Lime lost his words.

From the first day in their stay in Limia Kingdom, he already felt dark clouds enveloping him.

Chapter 206: A transient peace

“To think that Raidou-dono was someone that had come from another world, I wouldn’t have expected it. A hero would be one thing, but for a merchant to be summoned is something I wouldn’t have been able to imagine.”

A talk with prince Joshua.

In this place where no other noble is present, I was here alone with her.

What was reflected in my eyes when I was given permission to enter the room, was the figure of prince Joshua in a simple dress.

After finishing our remembrance talk about Rotsgard, prince Joshua suddenly brought out such a conversation.

“?!”

“I heard it from Hibiki. You are a resident from the same world of Hibiki, and also an acquaintance of hers. Of course, this is only known by me and his Majesty. We haven’t even told the Hopelace household that was together with us in Rotsgard.” (Joshua) Information from Hibiki-senpai huh.

Then it wouldn’t be strange for Joshua to know.

But for her to talk about such information as well, it seems like there’s proper trust between her and the Limia royal family.

Because the nobles go to the frontlines frequently, and there’s also the background that the power of the nobles is strong, I had some strange thoughts of it, but it seems like it ended with just being thoughts.

It was the type that would be better if it ended in needless anxiety, so I am relieved.

“From Senpai, I see. Ah it is certainly true that Senpai and I were from the same world. I don’t know how to explain it, so it is a personal history that I haven’t spoke of much though.” (Makoto) “...Must be. Special cases like Hibiki and the personage in the Empire have their background

assured by our God, but Raidou-dono was a sudden happening huh. When I heard the story from Hibiki, I was surprised, and at the same time, I felt respect towards you who became a merchant even after that.” (Joshua) “It is not as much as you say.” (Makoto)

It was just that my misfortune turned into fortune.

The truth is that there's not much I have achieved myself.

After saying a relative amount of details that Senpai told her of me, I could tell that prince Joshua doesn't know much.

If I were to speak with Hibiki in detail, it would be necessary to explain that the root reason of coming here was because of me and the Misumi household.

Be it Senpai or Tomoki, they originally shouldn't have had a trigger to be related to this world.

And yet, because of me, they were forcefully selected by the Goddess.

Even if it's the result from a selection, those two are totally victims.

In the first place, a decision like abandoning your world isn't something that can be decided in a short amount of time.

I decided to do so because of my own circumstances, and yet, I am regretting it even now.

That's why it is not a certainty if those two would have changed their answers now.

I do think that one day I have to properly apologize to Senpai and Tomoki, but how am I going to break it? The time where I am just brooding over it continues.

Because of the matter of Tomoe, it is even harder to talk with Tomoki about it after all.

It is still easier to tell Senpai, but...hah...

There's that matter and I know it is difficult, but if possible, I don't want to oppose them.

It is something that Tsukuyomi-sama asked of me, even if it was only moderately.

How vexing.

“At the same time, it allowed me to comprehend that power of yours. When Hibiki came to this world, she had the ability to fight with the leader of the knight division. She said she studied in Nakatsuhara and had learned about a variety of subjects; her knowledge and wisdom was quite the thing as well. In that case, you who have studied in the same place as her, beginning a business when coming to this world isn’t such a strange thing.” (Joshua) I feel like she is having an incredible misunderstanding.

It is beginning to sound as if high school is an incredible place.

Also, it would be very troublesome to talk with Senpai as the standard.

I am one year younger than her, and if asked if I can become like Senpai, I would have to say I can’t.

Even if I were to try for my whole life, I think it would be impossible.

In the first place, for a high schooler to begin a business is something obvious? Just what’s Senpai?

“Hibiki-senpai was a special and exemplary person even within the people in our world. I am way inferior compared to her. And when talking about the business, it would be one thing to finish the test of the guild, but in practice, I am being hindered by my own inexperience, and there are a lot of things that don’t go well for me, that’s why, I don’t have the ability that Joshua-sama thinks I have.” (Makoto) “Hibiki evaluated you pretty high, you know? She even said that there’s no one as reliable to have at one’s side than you, and that surprised his Majesty. I have heard that there’s the need to study a long time before being able to do the Merchant Guild test. And yet, you were able to call the test ‘one thing’, that must mean that even if Raidou-dono himself doesn’t notice, you are an exemplary person.” (Joshua) ...I think that the gaze of Hibiki was directed at Mio and Beren when she said that.

I don’t think she has noticed that it was us in Limia, and she doesn’t

know that I was the one who defeated the purple cloud either, so I can't think of a reason as to why she would evaluate me so highly.

Even if it's Senpai, she shouldn't have the foundations to evaluate me that high.

I am aware that I am incredibly blessed in talented people after all.

"Ahaha, when you say it like that it scares me. Right, speaking of surprise, your Joshua-sama's attire has surprised me. As expected, when you are indoors, you dress normally huh." (Makoto) "...No, even when I am indoors, I normally don't dress this way. It's been awhile since I have released myself from crossdressing." (Joshua) "Ah, is that so." (Makoto)

"Right now this room is being paid attention to in a lot of ways, so there's the point that there's no worries of the inside being peeked, and the guest that I was receiving is you, which serves as a big reason."

(Joshua) "Is it because I already know of the circumstances?" (Makoto)

"Yeah. It would have been fine if that was only a hobby of mine, but..." (Joshua) "As I thought, that's not the case." (Makoto)

"Me crossdressing is not something that I do because I like to. For me, it is nothing but a mean. It is something that if necessary, I won't hesitate in doing, but if there's no need to, I would prefer not doing it." (Joshua) "A mean... It sounds complicated." (Makoto)

Even so, I don't want to stick my nose in that, so I decided to just leave a vague response.

Whether the crossdressing is a hobby or a mean, I don't have much interest in it.

If this will only steer unnecessary trouble, I would prefer to change the topic.

Well, I was trying to avert from the topic of Japan, and in the end, I ended up in a conversation that doesn't have a good air, so my thinking was the shallow one.

Let's be careful...at least.

“In terms of feeling at home, this way feels more comfortable. And that’s why a part of me has used you in order to be dressed in this way. Please forgive me.” (Joshua) “No no, if it is only for this much, you can freely use me. Ehm, the normal gallant prince Joshua is lovely, but I think that the relaxed Joshua-sama is also beautiful.” (Makoto) I go for a compliment.

In Limia, there’s a lot of moments when compliments are necessary, so I have been taught a few of what they said I should remember, and I have now used some.

In the talk with the nobles, it was a barrage of questions, so I didn’t have much chances to use it.

Prince Joshua in his female appearance won’t be that noisy about it, so it is the perfect person to use them.

“Use those kind of compliments when you are at parties, or nobles that boast their wife. It is necessary for you to first learn how to say it in a more natural manner though. Ehm, in other words, it is out of the question.” (Joshua) So she has said ‘ehm’ huh.

That’s bad.

“Ah, sorry. I am just not used to say that. Because you are an acquaintance, I ended up trying it.” (Makoto) “...I am still this country’s prince, you know?” (Joshua)

A slight silence is created with prince Joshua making a complicated expression.

“You are in that appearance, so I thought that maybe it is fine to not mind about social status at this moment.” (Makoto) Since she is not meeting me as a prince, that means this matter is not about the country after all.

“It doesn’t seem to be enough, but you do have a relative amount of ability to make plans, so what’s needed is to pay attention to the other party’s feelings as well.” (Joshua) “Ugh, that’s a harsh evaluation.” (Makoto)

It was kinda soft, but I feel like she was basically telling me I was

showing my uselessness.

“And it seems like Raidou-dono doesn’t understand completely the reason why I am dressed this way. Hibiki is good at reading this kind of things, so I was unconsciously expecting that of you.” (Joshua) The reason she is dressed this way?

The security of this room is reliable, and since I already know her circumstances, I thought she just wanted to relax.

Prince Joshua herself said so.

Prince Joshua waited for my words for a while, and after letting out a short troubled sigh, she looked at my eyes.

“Raidou-dono, you have learned of my secret.” (Joshua)

“Y-Yes.” (Makoto)

“And then, I asked you to keep it a secret and returned to my country.” (Joshua) “Yeah.” (Makoto)

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

What’s happening?

Confirming the obvious, we once again fell into silence.

It is certainly true that I learned of prince Joshua being a woman, and after being asked to keep it a secret, we have met again like this in Limia, but...

What about it?

“...Hibiki told me that Raidou-dono is not someone that would plan a conspiracy, but I see, she referred to this huh. I now understand why when she was talking about Kusunoha Company, she corrected herself and spoke of Raidou-dono himself.” (Joshua) “E-Ehm...” (Makoto)

“At that time, I was unable to give any clear collateral to Raidou-dono, and didn’t even give anything like a deposit; the only thing I did was say some vague things. Then, how do you think I thought of Raidou-dono?”

(Joshua) “That you wanted to quickly present a collateral and be done with it, maybe?” (Makoto) “No.” (Joshua)

“The capital was made a mess and it was no time for this, maybe?” (Makoto) “No. That’s something that deviates from the preamble of ‘what I thought of Raidou-dono’.” (Joshua) That’s true.

But, something that prince Joshua thought of me.

It isn’t a collateral.

Even so, there hasn’t been so many thought transmissions lately.

I thought that maybe it was because the reconstruction was hard work.

When I met with Hibiki-senpai before, she didn’t say anything about it though.

Hm...then what would she think?

If it were me, regarding a faraway person that has learned of something that’s bad to be known and have only done some simple secret keeping....

...I would definitely be uneasy.

Depending on the situation, I probably would want to eliminate that person as fast as possible.

But there wasn’t a single assassin from Limia.

Then, investigate?

To learn if that person has told anyone else about it.

There weren’t reports of that either though.

If it’s not this, I am out of ideas.

“Then, you were uneasy, so you wanted to know of the person’s movements?” (Makoto) “That’s right. And from what I could tell, you haven’t disclosed my secret. You haven’t used it as a figurative talk either.”

(Joshua) So she was really checking us huh.

What method did she use?

I didn’t hear anything from my guys though.

“Yeah, and in truth, I haven’t told anyone.” (Makoto)

She did tell me not to tell anyone, and something like the secret of the second prince of Limia has no way of use for me.

“That’s why I will trust you from now on. With that meaning in mind, I showed myself in this appearance.” (Joshua) “Could it be, I was being suspected quite a lot?” (Makoto)

That’s kind of...shocking.

The royal family that has been living a sheltered life even within the humans, that’s something...

In the case of this person, it feels like it would be possible, but even so.

“Let me ask you back, why would I be able to trust you? A merchant that I suddenly met in Rotsgard and know nothing of his personal history.” (Joshua) “...”

That’s certainly suspicious.

Even if I don’t have the intentions to, it is natural from the viewpoint of the other party.

“At that time, I even estimated that my ruin would be coming. To the point that I even thought about how to dispose of my body so that it won’t cause problems for his Majesty. But you didn’t seem to have disclosed it, and there were no actions towards me with the knowledge you had.” (Joshua) Disposing of her body, she means suicide?

That’s scary.

“Like I said, I haven’t told anyone.” (Makoto)

Saying it in a slightly hard manner, I return the same response.

I didn’t even tell the people of Asora, or more like, I forgot about it.

“It is the secret of a second prince. Depending on how it is used, it is a suitable ingredient to increase your position as a merchant to one or two steps higher. To utilize it in some way is natural and logical for a merchant.” (Joshua) “...”

Ah, so that's why.

They did ask me things like: 'Do you have any plans in having a business in Limia?' or 'Don't you have anything you wish as an accommodation for what happened before?'.
I remember those thought transmissions I got before coming here.

'I currently don't have any plans of opening a store in Limia, so please don't mind it and concentrate in the reconstruction', is what I always answered every time it happened.

"Not only did you not utilize this secret, you didn't even speak to the nobles, and you don't have plans on opening a store in Limia; this, I have confirmed. Honestly, it is a hard to believe answer." (Joshua) "It is also because of the lack of personnel, but there's a lot of circumstances going on in Kuzunoha Company, so we can't increase the amount of stores that readily." (Makoto) To tell the truth, I have a few of my people doing peddling in Limia, but it is not to the point of making a store.

I was thinking about telling them this in our stay in Limia, but in terms of a store... Ah, right.

In that case, there's the method of revealing it to prince Joshua and have her convince the nobles so they don't go clamouring.

"I went further into thinking that you were different from a merchant, for example; a military personnel or a person that has ties with a noble, and that increased my caution even more. But after hearing Hibiki's story and your own talk, it seems like everything was just my own imagination going wild." (Joshua) "About that, there's something that I was planning on saying in time, so I was thinking about telling Joshua-sama first."

(Makoto) "...It feels like you just thought of it though, but well, tell me."

(Joshua) This is something that I have been thinking on who I should tell in the time I am in Limia.

It is just that I didn't think I would be telling this to prince Joshua at this moment.

The topic itself is not something that I thought of just now.

“In the Kuzunoha Company, there’s something like an out-of-store sales, or more like a peddling unit. There’s the fact that the unit has been doing business in a small part of the settlements in Limia, and in a small scale.” (Makoto) “Hm... I didn’t get reports of it, but I see.” (Joshua)

“It is probably not in the direct jurisdiction of the royal family, but I have received reports that we have done several transactions specially close to the borders in the territory of nobles.” (Makoto) “And?” (Joshua)

“I was thinking about obtaining the consent of the royal family and the nobles.” (Makoto) “Are you asking me to help you convince them?” (Joshua)

“If needed, I will also give you the reports of the sales and pay for the taxes as well, so please.” (Makoto) The transactions don’t deal with big amounts of gold, so even if we talk about taxes, it shouldn’t be that big of a deal. Probably.

If necessary, I should investigate about the tax of Limia.

Prince Joshua makes a thinking expression for a while.

The time she was thinking was a lot shorter than the times she showed me a complex expression, and then, she returned her gaze to me.

“...If it’s that much, there’s no problem. It also depends on the amount of money, but I will manage the part of the tax. I promise.” (Joshua) “That will help a lot.” (Makoto)

“At the reception, no, in the conversations a few moments ago, there were a lot of people wishing for Kuzunoha Company to open a store, right? There were people that didn’t say anything, but there were few who were opposed.” (Joshua) “Ah, now that you mention it, yeah.” (Makoto)

“Even if there are people that wish for you to increase the scope of your business, there’s most likely none who would actively ostrice you. Just in case, can you tell me the settlements that you know of have been in those business of yours?” (Joshua) Saying that, prince Joshua stands up from his seat and takes out a map of Limia kingdom from the shelf.

Just that it was quite a rough map.

I can tell the territories, but I can't tell the insides that well. It was close to being a blank map.

Only a few major points were drawn, and the paths were sparse.

Are the normal maps like this?

It is quite different from the one we normally use.

For now I just say ok, and point out the position of the settlements I have received reports of.

There's around 20 places.

If we include the villages they have gone to only once or have only seen, the numbers would increase by a lot, so I have only mentioned the villages that we have done trades with and the name of Kuzunoha Company has resonated.

Depending on the medicine selling of the Kuzunoha Company, I mean, the peddling, some people have begun calling the Forest Onis with a sad nickname like 'Kuzu-san' .

They are probably being called 'Kuzu-san' by the innocent kids and the elders that are enjoying their retired life. Honestly, that's quite the psychological attack.

And in truth, when they learned of it, they were quite down.

I have heard a few times that the village heads wants to meet me, but I didn't want to be called the boss of Kuzu-san, or the representative of Kuzu, so I haven't gone to any of those places.

"That's quite the number. But it looks like the number is higher in the west side." (Joshua) Prince Joshua writes down the places that I point out.

As a result, from the west side of Limia's national border to the south of it had been marked here and there.

"It seems like at the west side there's a lot of poor villages, so our people bring them goods often." (Makoto) "...Why? In poor villages, they won't be able to provide you the money, right?" (Joshua) Prince Joshua tilts her head.

Did I say something strange?

It is not like our place is selling high-class items though.

“But in poor villages, the people will need goods, right?” (Makoto)

We are only selling everyday goods and household medicine in places that are in need of those.

I don't think that's strange.

“Ehm...”

“What is it?” (Makoto)

It seems like prince Joshua frequently shows this kind of expression and stiffens up in silence.

It feels like she is bewildered because of meeting a mysterious being, or like she is surprised by it.

As I am not a rare animal, I am a bit sad about it.

“...No, it is true that if you are going through this kind of villages as your focus, it is understandable that the reports of the feudal lords are coming late. This is still something that hasn't been confirmed, but I will think of a method so that Kuzunoha Company can move more freely in the Limia territory. It is something that can be done since it is only on the scale of peddling after all.” (Joshua) “Easier to move...Like giving us a transition pass, or something like that?” (Makoto) Like the time in the demon race territory.

“A transition pass huh. A passage permission for the highway, permission for peddling inside the country; I still don't know what kind of form it will take. Just that, I will lend you my strength as thanks for protecting my secret.” (Joshua) “Thanks.” (Makoto)

“By the way, what other plans do you have here, Raidou-dono?” (Joshua)

“Ah, an acquaintance of mine requested me of something, so I was thinking about going out for around half a day.” (Makoto) Tomorrow and the day after tomorrow there's a lot of blank time.

To the point that if I were to move the plans of tomorrow to the day after, I would have one whole free day.

“To where?” (Joshua)

“The lake.” (Makoto)

“Ah, Seiko? At that place there’s a lot of people going for sightseeing, and it is close to the capital.” (Joshua) Yeah, I did hear about that.

A big lake at the vicinities of Limia that was created by the Devil, or so to say, me.

It is receiving a relatively good amount of sightseers, and in terms of practical use, they have been receiving resources from the lake or something like that.

If I were asked if I wanted to go there, as expected, I would have to shake my head sideways.

No way I would want to go there.

“No, it is the Meiris lake. I heard that it is a famous place in the Limia kingdom.” (Makoto) The place that Root told me is that.

I am grateful that it isn’t that far away.

Moreover, it seems like it isn’t as heavily managed like the desert of Gritonia.

“Meiris... It is certainly true that it is famous, but didn’t your acquaintance make a mistake in the place or something?” (Joshua) “No, I am sure that person said Meiris. He said that the entrance isn’t prohibited though. Is that not the case?” (Makoto) “That’s true. This lake is famous, and as long as we confirm the need to enter, there’s no prohibition in entering.” (Joshua) “That’s great.” (Makoto)

A part of me was internally nervous that maybe Root was trying to create more trouble again.

I remember the face of that guy that said: ‘My joints still hurt’, as he gave me the egg.

It was an aloof smile that as always, I couldn't tell what he was thinking.

"Just that it is dangerous. It is a lake where a superior dragon and the kingdom had an agreement. It would be one thing if it's people that are going there to test their strength or take the trials, but Raidou-dono is someone that our country has invited, and our side would prefer if you didn't go to such a dangerous place." (Joshua) "...I see." (Makoto)

Now that I think about it, the Gritonia desert was supposed to be a dangerous place as well.

It was a beautiful place, and since I was easily able to pass, I forgot about it.

Is this place also considered relatively dangerous as well?

'It is opened to the public and there's a beautiful lake shore, so go and have a walk around the lake when you return', is what Root told me though.

In that case, I will have to think of a way to stealthily leave this place again huh.

"I will tell his Majesty, but please don't expect much. If it can't be granted, I still have a few places I want to guide you to." (Joshua) "I am counting on you." (Makoto)

It is an answer that feels like it won't work.

If I say I will be bringing Mio, will it work?

It is fine if it is Lime.

Senpai knows of his skills, so maybe I can have her give her word as well.

After that, we did casual talk and talked about the state of the business, and with nothing special happening, the talk ended.

I could tell her about the Forest Onis selling medicine, and have heard a positive answer for this.

For me, it was a beneficial meeting.



Joshua thought that he was a troublesome person.

It was a truly frank evaluation.

This was practically the first time Joshua had talked with Raidou properly, but she felt like he was completely different from what she imagined him to be.

(Even though it was a verbal promise, he acted as if he had formed some sort of contract. That's something for me to be happy about, but turning it around, it would also mean that for him, verbal promises are as strong as official contracts.) (Joshua) A deceptive promise might become an unexpected restraint.

For Raidou, there's the need of a different standard in negotiations. Thinking this, a sigh unconsciously came out from Joshua.

(Also, his way of thinking when doing business. Even when compared to Hibiki, he is way too incomprehensible. His speech, tone, and expressions, it made me feel as if he was doing charity work or something. I do think that there's something wrong in me for thinking that way, but it throws me off.) (Joshua) Raidou didn't use her secret to threaten her.

He didn't ask for advantages in his business either.

The only thing he asked for was to give consent for the small scale peddling he did.

Even that, Joshua was doubting if he actually thought of it in advance before asking her.

(...No good. The information is way too limited, it would be better to just leave it like that. He is from the same world as Hibiki, moreover, someone that was studying at the same learning facility. I don't think he is just an ordinary person. It is also a mystery as to why he wants to go to Meiris instead of Seiko. If possible, I would want to observe him with a subordinate of my own, but I wonder...) (Joshua) He is not someone that can be left alone.

At that point, Hibiki, the Limia king, and prince Joshua are of the same opinion.

There was confusion after actually meeting him and talking with him, but Joshua's root way of thinking had not changed.

The highly efficient personnel of Raidou, and the rare ability of his Company.

And also the ability of the students he taught that can overturn common sense.

All of those points are things that they are unwilling to 'give to other countries'.

Especially Gritonia, if it were to go there, the balance in countries would crumble.

That's why, for Joshua, no matter where she looked, Raidou was....

"What a troublesome person Raidou-dono is." (Joshua)

Being in the middle of its reconstruction and still calling him in a hurry, does mean that Limia has ulterior motives.

From the royal family, Joshua and the King.

The hero Hibiki.

A number of quick witted nobles.

Right now they are still being docile, but Joshua expects that the merchants will be moving as well.

Tomorrow she will be dealing with those people, and moreover, she is thinking about showing him the current capital.

She filled her free time with things that had somewhat of an objective.

But if Raidou has a different request from that, even if the chances are low, she has no choice but to take it into consideration.

That request of his was also something that troubled her, and made her want to groan.



At the welcoming banquet, I was made to drink quite a lot, but my waking was pretty pleasant.

I conversed a bit with Senpai and her group, and the nobles asked me to try doing business in their areas no matter the scale.

His Majesty told me that he was anxious about the reconstruction of the city.

Once the support unit that went to Rotsgard returns, the reconstruction speed should increase, and there's good materials as well, but as expected, since it is winter, there's probably going to be more damage coming which made his Majesty feel depressed.

It won't be like Asora that has summer tomorrow.

In this one point, the demon race got them good huh.

And in truth, if you just do one step to the big street, you can see that the situation is like that of ruins, and at the outside of the reconstructed outer walls, there's still a lot of camps.

For me, it looked like the reconstruction of the capital was only beginning.

I am not unsensitive enough to say something like that to the people that are happy that it has advanced quite a lot, so I zipped my mouth though.

"Then I will guide Raidou-dono. Even if it costs me my life, I will assure you a safe journey. Please don't worry."

The journey to Meiris that I requested of prince Joshua yesterday has been granted in a strange form.

With the minimum amount of luggage, I was carrying the bag with the dragon egg, and in my front, there's Senpai who is completely armed.

Those words just now were something that she directed to the Limia people, Mio, and Lime.

It seems like my going to the Meiris Lake has been approved, if I have the hero Hibiki go with me.

The talk was made confidentially within a limited few and approved, so there are people that have puzzled faces seeing us two going to the lake.

Or more like, I am also bewildered.

Not even in Japan I had a chance to be alone with Senpai, but this is the second time already, counting the time when we were at the room of the company.

I was incredibly bothered by Mio, but she had shockingly accepted it and stepped back easily.

She is definitely plotting something.

She even made a Root-like laugh.

Root laugh.

Actually, the one protesting was someone from the hero's party.

It is a warrior-looking person.

If I remember correctly, it is Prince-sama.

If I am going to be resented(well, I can just separate from them in the middle), I don't have any problems in having him accompany us though. But in the end, because of the shout of the King-sama, he gave up.

Even so, the priestess is not here.

She hasn't opened her eyes yet?

Or could it be that she is feeling unwell and can't come?

It is worrying since Mio is going to be staying.

When I return, I will ask about her state again.

Mio is persistent in saying that she didn't do anything, and it didn't feel like she was lying.

But if Mio really didn't do anything, I don't think the priestess would turn that way after looking at her and I.

It is true that I am ugly by this world's standards, but even the first villager that I met in the wasteland only screamed and did a rocket dash.

...Only, huh.

No, let's not think about that.

That's why, even if the concealment of Sakai didn't work and she was able to see the Magic Armor, I don't think the priestess of the hero party that has experienced many things would faint because of it.

Just remembering it hurts.

At first, the Priestess-san looked dumbfounded, with an expression different from all the other expressions that were shown towards me.

When I looked back at her thinking it was a unique reaction, after a bit, she looked as if she had noticed something and opened her eyes really wide, her whole body trembling, and then, she went 'kyaaa' and falls.

Ah, it was shocking.

Even if it's as Mio says and the Priestess-san actually did something, I want to know the circumstances.

"Have a safe trip, Waka-sama. If the Hero-sama is with you, I don't have anything to worry about-desu wa." (Mio) "Be careful. Uhm, please leave the matters here to us." (Lime)

Lime seems like he wants to say something.

Even if he says to leave the matters to them, I know that it will be hard for him to hold back Mio.

Well, they will be guided by Joshua-sama and a number of retainers to the areas close to the castle.

If they just take care in that aspect, it will probably be okay.

"I will be going. Make sure not to trouble Joshua-sama and the people of Limia, okay? If anything happens, I will leave the decision to you two, just that, try not to obstruct the reconstruction work." (Makoto) "Understood." (Mio)

“Even if it costs me my life.” (Lime)

Hahaha.

Lime is imitating Hibiki-senpai. Even if you do that now, it isn't funny.

He even has a strangely serious expression too.

When I finish today's delivery, even if I pass the time being washed around by the other party, there won't be any problems in Limia.

I was unexpectedly able to speak with Senpai today so, how to say it, Limia is working well.

It feels like it will be more comfortable than the other tours in the foreign countries.

On our journey and at our arrival, there still hasn't been any unreasonable happening since coming here.

Gritonia is a major power as well, and since I had a preconceived notion that the nobles were oppressive, I probably misunderstood Limia.

“Well then, let's go Raidou-dono.” (Hibiki)

“I am counting on you today, Hibiki-sama.” (Makoto)

I thought that it would be bad to call Hibiki with -senpai, so I tried using -sama instead.

Senpai didn't seem to mind me changing my way of addressing her, she just nodded lightly and rode her horse first and began moving towards the Meiris Lake.

I turn around once to Mio who was waving at me, and then, I quickly follow after Senpai.

If it's Senpai, she will probably let me go alone if I just tell her the circumstances.

Now that I think about it, things like: 'Give me that person' and 'Show me your power', happened at Gritonia, and reminds me that I had gone to a problematic country.

It is one of the few tasks I have to do in Limia, so let's quickly deliver

this egg.

Chapter 207: A long long day in Limia (1st Half)

The Meiris Lake and the surrounding land is a special area that is managed by the Limia Kingdom.

In the public, there's a number of fronts, but in essence, it is the same as Gritonia Empire; a place that they have formed a contract with a dragon and the royal family is protecting.

Different from the Empire, the contract is something of the long past and has already begun fading from the memories of many people in Limia, and now only the royal family and nobles with authority know of the details.

Currently, the common knowledge of the Meiris Lake is not that it is the territory of a Superior Dragon, but that it is the training place of Limia with the highest danger level.

Misumi Makoto and Otonashi Hibiki were riding their horses and entered through the closest eastern gate, and they walk through the surface of earth that was made from the steps of others.

By the way, the guards of the eastern gate were suddenly notified that the hero would be going and were at their peak in nervousness. After desperately doing the explanation of Meiris Lake and safely finishing their introductions, they kneeled down.

“In Japan, horse riding is considered a special skill, but here, you just naturally learn it.” (Hibiki)

“Right, I was like that as well.” (Makoto)

“How many times did you experience having your horse run at full speed?” (Hibiki)

“Hm, it was a short distance, but around three times. Senpai seems to be quite used to riding. Do you ride them normally? Or did you have experience when you were in Japan?” (Makoto)

“Yeah, I had normal experience in Japan. But because I only knew the basics, it actually made it harder since I had to get used to riding on the horse and to the change of viewpoints. Even when it is the same form, the techniques required were different.” (Hibiki)

At the Meiris Lake, there’s a forest, a prairie, and a number of hills; and all of those together, make it as if it is one big national park.

Defeating mamonos or ending up as their meal are all your own responsibility.

The two were in a forest not far away from the capital that’s thick enough to be called a sea of trees. They were doing a conversation that didn’t fit the place as they walk through it.

They encountered mamonos a few times, but Hibiki cut them with the end of her sword.

Makoto was only following her from behind.

“By the way, Makoto-kun, this is the first time I have heard of people living in this place. What is it you are delivering?” (Hibiki)

“Sorry, it is supposed to be a secret, so I can’t answer. If the other party doesn’t mind it, I will show you at that time.” (Makoto)

“Too bad. The reason was plain curiosity, but I might as well try asking the other party.” (Hibiki)

Hibiki was really interested in the object that Makoto was delivering, but she easily drew back.

If she were to forcefully try to take a look at it or learn of it, it would be obvious that it would make the atmosphere heavy, and there was no benefit in that.

“Even so...Senpai has gotten strong. It seems like there’s no need for me to do anything. If I remember correctly, when you were in Japan, you were a national level swordswoman.” (Makoto)

Makoto remembers that Hibiki was an exemplar kendo user and nods.

There was one time when Makoto had seen a match of hers since the

archery club match was over and it was close.

At that time, the eyes of Makoto saw in the sword of Hibiki, not only kendo, but also an old sword style mixed in it as well. He didn't touch on that point though.

"My role is to protect you after all. If I weren't able to protect you on my own, I would have called my companions as well. It is a place where I am plenty enough, that's why it is only the two of us, that's all there's to it. I don't know if you actually need a bodyguard since you are able to make people like Tomoe-san and Mio-san obey you though." (Hibiki)

And in truth, Hibiki was not actually acting as a bodyguard.

Hibiki's objective was to have a connection with Makoto, and keeping him in check.

"No, it was a great help that Senpai was in Limia. Because with just Mio and Lime, I don't think the people of the country would be able to trust us. Even if we have power...it doesn't mean they will trust us." (Makoto)

Makoto honestly answers.

If only power was necessary, Makoto would be more trusted by others.

And in truth, Makoto –the Kuzunoha Company's Raidou– is being seen as a shady existence mostly because of his way of acting, but in a sense, Makoto felt the 'limit of only having power'.

To reach that conclusion you need to be quite the special case, and even if he feels it, the experience he should be gaining is a different problem.

At the very least, the current Makoto still doesn't have a clear grasp of the worth of his power.

"...Power is...the basis of everything. When you have enough of it, trust will take form in some way and follow you." (Hibiki)

"Is that how it works?" (Makoto)

Hibiki has been compensating for her weakness of long ranged attacks with magic and sword technique.

The fire spear that was released from her had pierced through the beast that came lunging at us, and was now carbonized.

The first sign of the attack was when the branches shook from the jump.

With a short aria, she was able to form a relatively powerful magic. This point made me feel the power of a hero.

If the people in Rotsgard Academy were able to do this, they would be able to gain a pretty big advantage.

It is not anything unique, but her foundation has been carefully polished by talent and hard work.

Her ability to defeat the enemy without them being able to do anything was something that made the people looking understand how incredible it was.

Hibiki opened a bit of time and gave an opinion to Makoto's words, and glances at him.

The fire spear that was shot in front of Makoto's eyes, the sword technique of Hibiki; Makoto gave words of admiration instead of surprise to all of those as he followed her.

"As an individual, an organization, or in an even bigger society; in the end, people are practically doing a competition in how much of that 'power' they can obtain. It's as if they are placing that basis as their everything." (Hibiki)

(So my power is within his predicted level huh. I have shown my serious side to Lime, so this probably can't be helped.) (Hibiki)

"Even in physical strength and fighting power? It is certainly true that in this world, the power of an individual can overwhelm an army though." (Makoto)

'That's something that only applies to this parallel world, and in Japan that doesn't work like that, right?', is what the eyes of Makoto were saying.

That look of his made a number of conjectures Hibiki had of Makoto disappear, and at the same time, it reinforced some conjectures she had as

well.

Without showing it in her expression, she continued speaking.

“Even here is the same as Japan, you know? Even if we call it power, this ‘power’ counts physical strength and wisdom. The integration of what you have obtained yourself, and what you have gathered; this will determine the size of your influence in society.” (Hibiki)

“...”

“Mankind are animals that show their best performance when they flock together. For example: friends, companions, and commanders; if those kind of people increase in numbers, they will be able to add their power to others. Even if it’s you alone or a group of people, power is power.” (Hibiki)

“...I feel like... what Senpai is saying and what I am saying are not coinciding at all.” (Makoto)

“No, it is exactly the same. Just that our allies are different. I think that no matter what power it is, it can be turned into a numerical value. You don’t think that way. I think that’s all there’s to it.” (Hibiki)

“Numerical value huh. It is certainly true that I haven’t thought much in that way. In the first place, I feel like it would be pointless to turn physical strength and wisdom into numbers.” (Makoto)

A judgemental opinion was given by Makoto.

But his expression didn’t show antagonism, it seemed as if he had a lot of questions popping in his head, Hibiki was able to notice it and nods.

Hibiki was having Makoto hear a deep opinion of hers with an intention in mind.

‘Even if you have power, you can’t obtain trust’, using those words of Makoto, she began this argument.

Well, the person himself doesn’t seem to have noticed it much, but even so, Hibiki didn’t mind and continued the conversation.

For the sake of doing what she wants to do with Makoto in this time

they are alone.

“Depending on the situation, it will double or be halved, but there’s plenty enough meaning in it. For example, Tomoki-kun and I are normally being compared, but between us heroes, there’s already differences. Strong points and weak points can’t be helped. That’s why, gathering people with aggregate amounts is important, but gathering people with different types of abilities is equally important.” (Hibiki)

“Senpai and Tomoki huh.” (Makoto)

“That’s right. In your analysis, Makoto-kun...hmpf, just what do you think?” (Hibiki)

In the middle of her words, she brushed away something resembling a dart, and just like that, she shortened the distance and cut several mamonos with her blade.

When she returned, she continued her question.

He could tell that Hibiki didn’t feel any pressure after entering the east gate that has the highest danger level.

“Tomoki is the offensive type. He is strengthened with his equipment, and by using powerful bursting abilities, he is able to defeat his enemies without them being able to do anything. His number one specialty is probably that. He also has his Charm, but it doesn’t have much point against people that are not affected by it anyways.” (Makoto)

“But in a sense, that Charm of his is the strongest weapon. Thanks to that, his actions within the Empire have gone practically unobstructed. It may be simple but his strategy is to trample down his opponents with high firepower, and with his Charm, he is able to easily turn opposing parties into supporters. Having these two, he is most likely able to do a lot.” (Hibiki)

“Ah, in other words, those points should be added as Tomoki’s power? It is a convenient power that can crush opposition before it occurs after all.” (Makoto)

“Yeah, I do want to hear more about him, but right now, I am more

interested in what Makoto-kun sees in me. Can I hear about me?” (Hibiki)

“Senpai is... Ah, I see. So that’s why I thought like that. As expected, how impressive...” (Makoto)

“Makoto-kun?” (Hibiki)

Hibiki thought that she would be hearing an evaluation of herself, but seeing Makoto beginning to understand something by himself, she makes a puzzled expression.

“Ah, sorry. Hibiki-senpai is able to do both physical and magical fights without any problems, and even if your magic is a slight weak point of yours, it is the all-purpose type. If there’s a hole in your formation, you can fill for the long ranged attack and lack of firepower, and with that reaction speed, I think there’s practically no problem in that.” (Makoto)

“...”

“Compared to Tomoki, your firepower is lower, but I think you win in all other aspects. Also, I feel like Senpai’s specialty is not battling.” (Makoto)

“Heh~.” (Hibiki)

“This is something I thought when I was in Japan too, but Senpai actively looks to obtain connections with people that can do what you can’t. I think that’s incredible. Even though there should be opposition and a lot of other things that make it hard for both parties to connect, you are good at getting along with them, like doing discussions that I wouldn’t be able to imagine we are the same age, and it felt like you were used to speeches.” (Makoto)

“It is not like I can do anything by myself after all. I have other people help me in the things I lack of, isn’t that kind of thinking natural?” (Hibiki)

“Even though you are a person that can do a lot by yourself, you are still able to think in that way. That’s not something natural. And I thought this after hearing what Senpai said just now, that maybe Senpai’s number one power is that.” (Makoto)

“I feel like you are praising me, and at the same time, I feel like you aren’t. Those are vague words.” (Hibiki)

“I am praising you. That no matter what area that person excels in, Senpai is able to look at them without clouded eyes, and see that person’s power. And especially those normal persons that don’t have a big talent or power, you understand that they are able to do something big as long as they gather and help each other. That point of view, or more like, that way of thinking is what I think is Senpai’s number one power.” (Makoto)

Each person has their own plan.

Even so, people gather around the surroundings of Hibiki, cooperate with her, and on top of that, they live for their own objective.

In the eyes of Makoto that is looking at this from far away, that’s how he saw Hibiki and her surroundings.

She is able to accomplish anything, and she is kind to people too.

That’s why Makoto evaluated Hibiki as a perfect superhuman, a genius.

Hearing Hibiki’s way of thinking, his thoughts changed a bit, but the impression of Makoto towards Hibiki didn’t turn bad.

If he were at Hibiki’s side, he would probably be able to find ugly selfish parts of hers, but Makoto and Hibiki didn’t have that much interaction to reach that point.

Making the best out of people.

That’s exactly the talent of Hibiki, is what Makoto thought as he felt true admiration.

“Thanks, I am happy.” (Hibiki)

(...As I thought, he is not an idiot. Even though it is limited, he is able to evaluate people, and he is probably the type that keeps some inside of himself. I have heard about a few poor conducts of him, but...could it be... he still hasn’t learned of a way of acting that fits the stage he is standing in? Kuzunoha Company is a company that has suddenly gathered attention and is growing, it is a possible case. That he is having a radical

increase in attention and is growing continuously means that the person himself has high potential, but if his ability and the ability of his company are not proportional... In the time he was at Japan, from what I remember, he was the type that specialized in one talent. He had average grades and physical ability, only in his club did he show extraordinary abilities, is what I think. It is a faint memory that I was somehow able to remember though.) (Hibiki)

“Ahaha, well, I heard from Lime that you had a slightly hard fight at Lorel, but that was probably because there weren’t the necessary people gathered around Senpai at that moment. If it’s Senpai, you probably already have countermeasures for that.” (Makoto)

Being given a honest thanks, Makoto gets embarrassed.

If it were in Japan, this is a situation that would never occur.

“A perfected long ranged firepower huh. It is sad to say, but that countermeasure is still lacking. The reconstruction of the capital is a pressing matter after all. We have been trying a few things with my comrades, but I think that it still isn’t at the passing mark.” (Hibiki)

(But it is clear that he has touched several fields when he arrived at this world. His company’s business conditions and his classification was an anything-goes store. Medicine that doesn’t let anyone follow in effectivity and cost performance. Even though it should be difficult to transport goods in the wasteland, they have a stable supply of ingredients and goods. With their abnormal speed in circulation of goods, I can only think that they have surpassed the modern day Japan. They have a stable management of dwarf equipment that humans have a hard time to get their hands on. Tomoe-san, Mio-san, and Lime are employees that have overwhelming power enough to make mercenaries run away. None of those are things that can be obtained by being specialized in archery. In the first place, his actions up until now have been that of a rising merchant, which makes it even harder to believe... In that case...) (Hibiki)

“When talking about long ranged attacks, in this world, as expected, magic is the one that shines. If it’s only a single attack, ritual magic is best,

but the preparation is troublesome, and it is easy to make countermeasures for it.” (Makoto)

“Also, it should be a slightly adaptable power. With the firepower of ritual magic, it would be passable, but in adaptability, it is weak. Effectivity, range, accuracy. The reconstruction makes me feel bitter, but my own incompetence too. Even though Rotsgard that was destroyed at the same time has advanced that fast in it, I am here, and that makes me feel that maybe I could have done more.” (Hibiki)

(And most of all, his thick Japanese smell is bothering me. It is already been two years since coming to this world. Even Tomoki who has created a harem, has changed quite a lot compared to his time in Japan, and even I am remembering my past and trying to bring out that old self. And yet, his natural state smells like that of a Japanese, at least on the outside. What’s going on? He is way too involved in this world to be evading reality. Just what kind of lifestyle did he live in order to turn out like this?) (Hibiki)

“In the Kusunoha Company there are a number of people specialized in long ranged attacks, but as expected, I just can’t lend you my important employees all the time. Sorry.” (Makoto)

“...Is the person that shot that incredible attack in Lorel...one of them as well? That attack was shot from a crazy distance, and had destructive power on the level of a bomb. It was like a cutting-edge weapon in terms of accuracy.” (Hibiki)

(This is something that I have thought after arranging the information I have of me and Tomoki, and checking the common points of us heroes. Could it be that part of those things also apply on him as well? The outward appearance is probably not a requirement when being summoned. It is most likely necessary to have an above-average talent and a special trait, but then, this boy has a number of common points with me? No. The common points of Makoto-kun, Tomoki, and me huh. Maybe I should verify the points that are not the general type from the common points Tomoki and I share. The number one would be his attachment to his original world but...I feel like he is different in that aspect from us.) (Hibiki)

“Ah, that huh. Was it that weird?” (Makoto)

“It wasn’t strange. It was incredible. If someone were to get into a fight with the Kuzunoha Company, it might not be at the level of a capital, but it would be able to wipe out most towns in one attack. Just thinking that, my back shivers.” (Hibiki)

(The Goddess said we can’t return anymore. Tomoki and I accepted this and wished for it, so our attachment isn’t that big. Well, it is true that I sometimes miss the food of Japan and the peaceful life which I feel a different sense of value in. But that’s all there is. The things this world has given me are bigger. It should be the same for Tomoki. Actually, that guy has made a harem that he can do anything with, and even with that, if there’s a time when he says he wants to return to Japan, I feel like as a woman, I would have to eliminate him first before the Demon Lord. There’s also unconfirmed information that some Empire noble has given birth to the child of Tomoki. And in truth, there’s a number of girls that are currently pregnant.) (Hibiki)

“Ahahaha...” (Makoto)

“The person that did that was someone I know? Tomoe-san, or maybe Mio-san?” (Hibiki)

(Well, leaving that aside, the next thing that bothers me is this. Thinking about the natural traits of a hero, I would be able to understand, but I am slightly wondering if those two ‘are the same’ as well.) (Hibiki)

“Actually, the elder dwarfs made an incredible weapon, and with that weapon, I uhm... I did it. Uhm, I wouldn’t pointlessly destroy a town, so I hope you understand we wouldn’t use it to make negotiations in Kuzunoha Company.” (Makoto)

After emphasizing that it was a dwarf weapon, Makoto confessed.

“?!!”

(Wait, WHAT DID HE SAY?!) (Hibiki)

“I didn’t expect for it to be so powerful~, ahahaha.” (Makoto)

In Makoto's case, he thought an attack of that level wasn't something surprising, but he took the words of Hibiki as how the general populace would interpret it.

"Makoto-kun...shot an attack of that level?!" (Hibiki)

"Well, yeah." (Makoto)

"...You did it alone, right?" (Hibiki)

"...Yes." (Makoto)

Hibiki was confirming and Makoto nods.

"..."

"Senpai?" (Makoto)

"I see, so Makoto-kun is a long-range attack expert huh. I was surprised." (Hibiki)

(My plans on how to deal with him...more than half of them have been trashed. This is bad. In that case, the more I need to ask him that before it becomes unpredictable.) (Hibiki)

"In the first place, my specialty was the bow. Even in this world, I am relying on it." (Makoto)

"By the way, Makoto-kun, I don't think it is possible to obtain power of that level by ordinary means but, can I ask you something?" (Hibiki)

It is not like Makoto has faced hardships in his training since coming to this world.

Actually, the time he faced hardships was in his childhood when his body still didn't have the physical strength of a normal person, and that's a story of when he was in Japan.

"If it's something I can answer." (Makoto)

Makoto answers the question of Hibiki with the convenient phrase he has settled of in saying since becoming a merchant.

"Makoto-kun, have you killed humans, demi-humans, or demons?" (Hibiki)

“I don’t know why you mentioned demi-humans and demons separately but, I have. It may be a bit, but I have also experienced the battlefield.”
(Makoto)

Makoto easily affirms this.

“So Makoto-kun thinks of the demons as demi-humans. But I see, you have.” (Hibiki)

“Receiving a terrible treatment, being directed murdering intent, being attacked; this world is seriously dangerous for one’s life.” (Makoto)

(Demons and demi-humans are only one race huh. In the hyuman force, it is something that’s rarely heard. Even I unconsciously thought that the demons and the demi-humans were separate races until recently. In that case, in his eyes, he might be seeing the current war with the demons as a revolution from the oppressed class. That’s troublesome. Also, he easily admitted murder. If he learned of morals in Japan, no, if it’s a person that has learned in an advanced country, they should have strong opposition in taking the lives of others. That’s not something you do half-heartedly. There’s a large number of soldiers that choose to forsake their own lives because they are unable to kill others in the battlefield; this is something I read in the documents once. Being able to kill others, in a sense, being able to cross that line can be considered a special trait in itself. When I investigated, I learned that in the past the army had done trainings to numb that avoidance of them. And yet, me, Tomoki and him; all three of us were able to conquer that and have survived until now. Was it a coincidence?) (Hibiki)

“That’s true. I have killed a lot of demons in the battlefield, demi-humans that have pointed their blades at me, and...have killed a number of hyumans as well.” (Hibiki)

“In my case, acquaintances of mine were killed by hyumans and that turned into my motive.” (Makoto)

(A while after losing Naval, I was truly cornered mentally. Even if the other party is an enemy, the action of taking a life is definitely stressful. Especially when your heart is weakened. Right now I am already used to it,

but how does Makoto-kun feel about it? From how Tomoki said it, I could feel that Tomoki was just acting tough. But at that rate, I think he has already turned deviant again. It seems like he obtained that power in the weird space before me after all.) (Hibiki)

“...No, at first I thought that this made me a murderer, and I was indeed troubled by it. It is certainly true that I took away the lives of many after that as well, but it was in a place where the other party was prepared for that to happen. And the other is in places like the wasteland where the survival of the fittest prospers.” (Makoto)

Thinking about the savanna-like wasteland, Makoto makes a bitter smile.

But Hibiki opened her eyes wide at the words he said before that.

“What’s that about being prepared?” (Hibiki)

Her expression had returned to normal, but her voice was slightly shaky.

(What’s this...? There’s an incredible chill running through my back...) (Hibiki)

“If you are armed and fighting in the battlefield, that means they are prepared to take lives away and prepared for their lives to be taken, right? Moreover, even if it isn’t a battlefield, if they have experience in killing someone, they shouldn’t complain about being killed themselves. That’s the same for me and Senpai, and there’s no way in telling where hatred will be born. I know that my brain wouldn’t be able to estimate it anyways, so I have given up on that.” (Makoto)

“...T-Then, the people that have resolved themselves to fight and have ended up killing someone, is Makoto-kun saying that you...wouldn’t hesitate in killing someone like that?” (Hibiki)

“That’s only if it’s necessary. People don’t kill just because they want to, you know?” (Makoto)

“..If that were the case, that person would end up as a simple murderer that repeatedly kills just for pleasure after all.” (Hibiki)

(Makoto-kun...he is really answering indifferently as if it's nothing. It is a calm attitude that's unthinkable for it to be acting. This is bad...bad, bad, bad! He is within the people I think is dangerous, no, an existence even more dangerous than that. I don't know why, but he still maintains his Japanese feel subconsciously, so there's probably still room to deal with him. For this boy...just how light does he view a life?) (Hibiki)

“Something like a serial killer, that's no joke.” (Makoto)

“Lives are important, right? Because it is something that people only have once, it is an important and irreplaceable thing.” (Hibiki)

“Yeah, everyone has only one in their possession. They only have one, and yet, why are there people that take it away or utilize it to fatten themselves? The people that become soldiers probably do it for things like protecting the things that are important for them, but even so, they live every single moment of their lives in full.” (Makoto)

The sight of a serene and beautiful lake steadily began showing its appearance from within the gaps of the trees, and it would not be wrong to call it a picturesque scenery.

But within the head of Hibiki, she didn't have any surplus to enjoy that.

Inside, she was wondering what she should do with Makoto, and wondering if he is a good person to talk about the topic she had planned.

Those were the things that were spiralling in her head.

Makoto noticed that the lake was beginning to show itself, and pointed at it as he tells Hibiki. Her response showed no spirit compared to the ones until now.

(Something that everyone naturally has, using it to fatten themselves? It is as if he is saying 'you have only one, so you have to use it with care', but it feels like he weighs it as much as a casino coin. How light. He views lives way too lightly. Even if Makoto-kun were to take away the lives of thousands or millions, if that's a battlefield, he would think that the other party has given consent for their death. No, not only that. If my worst guess is right, this boy that's talking to me right now has already

committed mass murder. There's the possibility that he has said this with this kind of mindset. I don't know why there's so much difference in battle power between him and me, but right now, what's more important is to place some sort of brake in him or it will be way too dangerous. What to do... What should I do? As I thought, the schedule of us coming here was way too soon. If I had heard what Chiya-chan saw of him, I might have been able to prepare a more detailed counter-plan. But in that case, Mio-san and Lime would move in the shadows, and he would have been able to come here alone. There's a high chance that this opportunity of being alone with him would have been gone completely.!! Right, the reason why Mio-san was strangely cooperative was because...she wanted me to notice his power and how dangerous he is. And to make me understand what would happen if we were to get in the way of Makoto-kun and Kuzunoha Company, no matter if it's a major power. In basis, they would be able to utilize that long ranged attack to destroy towns one after the other, and supported with that supply line, they would crush the army with the monsters that are a match of thousands. With only the war potential that I have a grasp on, they are probably able to bring down even Limia. What an ambush I got...) (Hibiki)

"Looking at it, I can expect much of Meiris Lake. When the errand is over, can I get some time even if it's only for a bit? I want to take my time checking it out." (Makoto)

"...Yeah." (Hibiki)

"Now that I think about it, that Lorel priestess, Chiya-san, was it? That girl, is she alright? I heard that she is down from a shock, and I have been bothered by it." (Makoto)

"...Is that....because she looked at you and fell?" (Hibiki)

"Uh, as I thought, it was really because of that? What was the reason for it? Honestly, I couldn't tell why." (Makoto)

"That was...my doing. Didn't you get a report from Lime about the power of the priestess? You seemed to know about the matter with the purple cloud after all." (Hibiki)

“The power of the priestess?” (Makoto)

Makoto tilts his head at the words of Hibiki.

About the eyes of the priestess, Lime had reported it to Tomoe, and Tomoe thought of several countermeasures with Shiki and Mio.

Just that it didn't take actual shape, and in the end, Mio didn't use any countermeasure at all when she faced the priestess.

Makoto doesn't know anything about that.

Makoto did tell his followers to only report him things that are necessary, but they didn't tell him all the information.

Because even if he were to be told that, he wouldn't be able to process everything.

Just by listening and reading the reports, the day already passes.

Regarding the priestess' eyes, they planned on telling him before going to Limia, but in the end, it slipped by.

They concluded that they would be leaving it to the countermeasure of the super confident Mio.

“Chiya-chan is able to look at that person's essence, or more like, real nature. In other words, she obtained a demonic eye that can see through the self that the person himself doesn't notice.” (Hibiki)

“Is it like the mind's eye?” (Makoto)

“Probably. And in truth, only she can use it, and she has finally grown capable of utilizing it on her own will, that's why we returned to Limia. The other day, I told her to look at Mio and Makoto-kun with that eye of hers.” (Hibiki)

“...That means, she saw something in Mio and got a shock, and when she saw something in me, she collapsed?” (Makoto)

“That would be the case. I still don't know what she saw. I have done something bad to Chiya.” (Hibiki)

(Even the chills and bad feeling I am getting are intense, so the thing

that Chiya-chan saw might have been outrageous. But when she saw me, it seems like she saw my self shining. This ominousness I am feeling from Makoto-kun, just how was it reflected to Chiya-chan? That girl has amassed a good amount of experience, and she wouldn't fall unconscious for most of anything.) (Hibiki)

“That's information that makes me pretty depressed.” (Makoto)

(Mind's eye huh. I can't say that it would bring real harm to me, so maybe that's why Tomoe and the others didn't notify me of it? And in truth, it was the other side that collapsed anyways.) (Makoto)

Without being agitated that much about not being told of the priestess' eyes, Makoto just accepts it.

‘Things like true character and essence, wouldn't getting those checked actually be something to be grateful about?’, is what he was thinking at most.

“When she wakes up, I will ask her about the image she saw of you, so if you want to know, I will tell you. You can probably learn something of yourself that you didn't know of, you know?” (Hibiki)

“Is it okay to hear it? I actually have interest in it.” (Makoto)

“It will depend on Chiya to see if you will be allowed to be present at that moment though. It would be troublesome if she were to collapse again after all.” (Hibiki)

(Hiding or deceiving would be a bad move. It is not completely impossible, but he is not someone that I can have as my enemy. Even so, I can't help being scared of having the current Makoto-kun as an ally. The best plan would be isolation. To create an environment that no one would be able to use him...) (Hibiki)

“...She went ‘kyaaa’ after all.” (Makoto)

“In my eyes, you look like a normal young man though. Well, I do sympathize since that appearance is probably giving you a hard time in this word.” (Hibiki)

(First, the most indispensable thing is to have him at arm's reach, in a distance that the eye can catch. And then, I have to learn of what he treasures, what he wants to protect; I have to grasp that inclination of his. The war with the demon race is still in progress, and even if it reaches the point of post-war period, it is easy to see that the Empire's Tomoki is going to go wild. Right now we have our hands full with the reconstruction of Limia's capital, and cleaning the festers created, and yet, an unbelievable thing has come in front of me. He is practically a world destroying bomb like the ones that appear in low-budget SF movies. To overcome all this, I have to move now. Seriously, this world is really worth being in. Could it be, that Goddess is the God of trials or something?)
(Hibiki)

“Hard time...I really did have a lot of those.” (Makoto)

“About that, I would like to take some time and listen to it after we finish your errand here.” (Hibiki)

At the field of vision that was cleared in a moment, the big lake that was visible reflected the sunlight, and it was simply beautiful.

In the path that Hibiki and Makoto passed through, there were a lot of corpses, but a spectacle that seemed like it was washing away that brutal reality was spread before their vision.

As Hibiki spoke with Makoto, her impression and evaluation of him had changed drastically.

When she arrived at the lake, what she was thinking was about the time when priestess Chiya would be waking up, a thinking that was really set foot into reality.



On the other hand, at that time, the priestess had woken up.

Still in her lying position, she only had her eyes opened without saying anything.

She was silently breathing.

(Mio-san is the spider. The Black Calamity Spider. I can't believe it, but it is the truth. That person looked like the same giant black spider of that time. No, it wasn't the same. There were two things that were different. The first thing were those eyes, in the past I could only see fiery instinct burning from those eyes, and yet, now they were incredibly calm and quiet. The other one was...a choker.) (Chiya)

Chiya was thinking.

About what she saw from the Kuzunoha Company when they arrived at Limia.

Lime who had come out first, was the same as before.

In a spectacle that looked like a diorama, there's a large tree.

Looking at it calms her. In the images Chiya has seen, it is still top class.

The next one that appeared was the black haired woman, Mio. The moment Chiyo saw her, she almost unintentionally screamed.

A giant black spider appearing from the carriage.

It didn't rampage in any way, and was simply smiling at Chiya who was looking at her.

Chiya placed a hand on her mouth, and was somehow able to hold down her voice, trying her best to be as calm as possible.

And then, she noticed.

Those eyes that were different from before, eyes that one could feel intelligence in, and that choker.

That choker had a chain attached to it.

At times, the spider showed loving gestures as she touched the choker and chain.

It didn't seem to hate it.

And that chain stretched towards the inside of the carriage.

Kuzunoha Company's representative, Raidou.

Finally, the concerned party had come out from the carriage.

At first, Chiya was looking at Raidou's figure without using the mind's eye.

As a human, it was an ugly appearance that's normally not seen, but that's all there was to it.

She was unable to perceive his magic power, so compared to Lime and Mio, one could tell at a glance that he was weaker.

It is said that he is a merchant, and it doesn't seem like a specially strange person, is how Chiya felt.

And then, she looked at Raidou with her mind's eye.

(He had a chain in hand. The chain that extended from the spider.)
(Chiya)

He had a human shape in complete smooth white like that of an egg.

It had a short build, and it looked like the silhouette of Raidou himself.

Until now, Chiya has seen a number of people looking like this.

There have been people that looked like they were made out of mud, and there were also people with a metallic tinge as well.

It is not a common case, so Chiya guessed that maybe it is an image that people, who are bound by something, share.

And the only thing they have in common is that they are human shaped and traitless.

There were some who had long limbs, but that depended on the person, and Chiya herself still doesn't understand what it means.

This is something that's brought by her lack of experience, and it can't be helped.

In the image of Raidou, there was a big and incredibly beautiful bow in his left hand.

And in his right hand, there were three chains.

One of the chains extended towards the spider, and the remaining two stretched towards the distance.

(The meaning of those chains is probably that of control, or servitude. The bow is the weapon he uses. Just that, it was incredibly beautiful and it looked like he was holding it precious, so it probably doesn't amount to only that.) (Chiya)

At first, Chiya was able to observe the image of Raidou with composure.

Things like the chains, the bow, and that white; she was able to think of their meaning.

Until she noticed something, that is.

She remembers that it was somewhere around his neck.

Just trying to search for that memory was making her whole body shiver.

But Chiya closed her eyes once, and opened them as if she had prepared herself. The trembling in her body stopped, and she faced that memory.

She didn't want to repeat her failure.

(Right, if I remember correctly, it was at his neck. At only that one part, the smooth surface was cracked, and the very center of it was dark. I thought it was a small stain, but it wasn't. It was hollow.) (Chiya)

At that time, Chiya strained her eyes and tried to look inside that darkness.

And then, she saw it.

(Something was there. Was there? Is there? I don't know. But those eyes, they were only looking at me, and yet, my head was inundated by several images of death. It was as if I was being killed over and over. This is only my hunch but, I think that's not a living thing. It is something that shouldn't have eyes to begin with. And that something is looking at the outside from within him. With great interest, it looks around restlessly.) (Chiya)

Chiya who was facing the eyes that were peeking from the crack of the image, had fear grabbing a tight hold of her body, and just as her emotions

told, she screamed.

Even if she screams, he won't disappear, and it won't solve anything.

She knew that, but even so, Chiya had no other choice but to scream.

When confusion and fear fill up one's head, they turn that way, is what Chiya thought as she looks back at her disgraceful behavior.

In all of her life until now, she hasn't experienced something like this.

Chiya didn't have the confidence to stay calm if she were to meet Raidou and Mio again.

(A person that has something like that within himself, is able to control that black spider. Sairitz said that he is the same Wise like Onee-chan, so she wanted him to visit Lorel, but that's not good, that person is a no. I don't know what those other chains are connected to either.) (Chiya)

The demon race and the Demon Lord are enemies that Chiya can still understand.

The fight against the demi-humans and mamonos that oppose humans as well.

Currently, Chiya, for the first time in her life, couldn't understand the foundation of something, and was being enveloped by a giant uneasiness she doesn't know what to do about.

The reason was obviously Raidou.

(What is the Kusunoha Company? It is definitely not a simple store...) (Chiya)

While knowing that she definitely had to report about what she saw, Chiya was still unable to leave her bed.

Just that, her impression of Raidou who she hasn't exchanged a single word yet, was now the worst.



"Hm...Senpai, over here." (Makoto)

"Makoto-kun, this is your first time coming here, right?" (Hibiki)

“Yes.” (Makoto)

“Why can you tell it is there? You don’t have a map, right?” (Hibiki)

“That’s because I was told the location of the person that will be guiding us in this lake.” (Makoto)

“Hmph~, I see.” (Hibiki)

Makoto and Hibiki walk through the lake shore.

Makoto was walking without any hesitation and Hibiki asked for the reason of it.

Half of Makoto’s answer was a lie.

It is true that he heard a guide would be waiting around the lake, but Makoto was actually using [Sakai] to pinpoint that person’s location.

Right now he is not using his Magic Armor, and was only using [Sakai] to investigate the surroundings.

(Thinking about the place we will be going now, I think it would be better not to use Materia Prima. But when you abbreviate Materia Prima it turns out as MP, that literally translates to magic points. And it can also be reversed to turn in PM. Maybe Root doesn’t have naming sense. Well, it is not something I can say though.) (Makoto)

Makoto was completely in sightseeing mode.

On the other hand, Hibiki was in quite a tense state.

There’s the fact that she is thinking of a countermeasure for Makoto, but if it were only that, it would still be within her permissible range.

That she is currently losing that surplus she normally leaves was because she was cautious of the encounter between a certain existence in the Meiris Lake with Makoto.

Hibiki has been notified that this place is the territory of the Superior Dragon with the alias ‘Waterfall’.

Hibiki who had previous experience in encountering Lancer, had more knowledge of a Superior Dragon than normal people.

She hasn't met one directly, but it is a dragon that even has a regional religion.

She understood that it isn't an existence that can be carelessly touched.

(I have never met the Waterfall dragon, but there's no doubt that it is that dragon that is maintaining the control of Meiris Lake and its surroundings. The reason that faith is directed at it is more because of the gratitude for the blessings it has given than its power. The mamonos don't come out from the forest around the lake and they don't try to increase their turf. It's no mistake that this unnatural situation is related to the dragon. And in truth, the water that this lake has, has benefited in the expansion of the greenery. Hunters have been coming and going to the outer circumference of this forest, and in the several rivers that this lake has created, towns have prospered. In other words, the Waterfall dragon is a dragon that can coexist with humans. In that case, it is better to avoid unnecessary dispute. I can't have it die by the hands of Makoto-kun.)
(Hibiki)

For Hibiki, Makoto had already become an existence that can defeat Superior Dragons.

No, he had already become an existence that surpasses the Waterfall dragon.

This is one of the many possibilities that Hibiki has created in order to grasp the background of Makoto.

Right now, Hibiki saw Makoto as a dangerous being that has a 'Don't touch, dangerous' sign with skulls all over the place.

"Ah, there it is." (Makoto)

"Eh?" (Hibiki)

Being told that, Hibiki looks at the place that Makoto pointed.

At the faraway waterside, there's certainly something visible.

"It is that person, the guide. Just in case, I will ask if it's okay for Senpai to accompany me further." (Makoto)

“Hey, Makoto-kun. I am sorry for saying something that’s probably obvious but, there’s someone here in this lake that’s like a chief, and it is like a water god of sorts.” (Hibiki)

“A water god huh. Nice way of putting it. It is true that it might fit Orient dragons.” (Makoto)

“...You know that something is in Meiris Lake, right?” (Hibiki)

“That there’s something, you say... Well, yeah. I do know the basic knowledge of the place I am going. This place is the territory of the Waterfall Superior Dragon, right?” (Makoto)

“...That’s something that’s not made public though. It is only being passed as a legend in the villages close to here and the towns that are at the river basins.” (Hibiki)

Hibiki herself had heard this directly from the royal family, so learning that it was being passed down as a legend was something that happened after.

Just that, the way Makoto spoke so confidently that there’s a Superior Dragon called Waterfall in this Meiris Lake was bothering her.

“I heard that from the person that requested this delivery.” (Makoto)

“By the way, can you tell me of that requester? I am a Japanese person and a hero, but it is also true that I am associated with Limia Kingdom. I can’t have you making problems with a Superior Dragon.” (Hibiki)

“...About the requester, please let me ask the person himself in another day. It is a job, so I think it is best to not say anything I don’t know if it’s okay to say. But it isn’t a business that will cause any problems with the Waterfall dragon, so it is safe.” (Makoto)

“Understood. I will trust Makoto-kun.” (Hibiki)

(It seems like he at least has a sense of responsibility in the job he has accepted. Just that, uhm, the one that Makoto-kun pointed out as someone...isn’t it a mamono? In that case, it should be appropriate to think that it is not a request from the Adventurer Guild. Just what is he

giving to who?) (Hibiki)

As she guessed, in the place that the two have arrived at, there wasn't a hyuman, but a mamono.

Hibiki could feel that it was a mamono that was within the strong kinds, and that mamono was approaching them without showing any kind of hostility as it made contact with them.

For a hero that has only been fighting the mamonos, this was a bothering reaction.

“Greetings. You have received word of me, right? I am the one that came with the delivery, name's Raidou.” (Makoto)

The mamono nods.

(Words are working? Is that an ability of Makoto-kun?) (Hibiki)

In Hibiki's ears, Makoto's words were heard as japanese.

But those are not words that work on mamonos.

And yet, it seemed like Makoto's words got through the mamono, and Hibiki guessed that maybe Makoto used some sort of ability.

“Yes, that's right. I have it here. Also, if it's okay, the Limia Kingdom's hero Hibiki-san seems to want to go as well. Is that okay?” (Makoto)

“...”

(He is having a conversation, right? In my eyes, it only looks like a lump of gel, the size of a hyuman, trembling. Thought transmission? But Makoto-kun is speaking normally.) (Hibiki)

“Thank you very much. Eh, here and now? Understood.” (Makoto)

In the time that Hibiki was thinking about a lot of things, the conversation seemed to have reached a conclusion. Makoto gave his thanks and then, it seems like it requested something, he took the bag at his shoulder and opened it.

What appeared was a big egg.

Hibiki thought it was a spherical object, but it was something that

surpassed Hibiki's expectations.

"...Makoto-kun, what's that? I can tell it is an egg by looking at it though." (Hibiki)

Hibiki felt that if she asked just like that, she would only get a response that it is an egg, so by taking into account the response he might give, she asks for a deeper explanation.

It was a pretty big egg.

At the very least, it is an egg Hibiki has never seen before.

"It is rare to see one of this, right? It is a dragon egg." (Makoto)

"DRAGON?!" (Hibiki)

Her words unintentionally came out strong.

The Meiris Lake is the territory of a Superior Dragon.

And at a place like that, they are having a conversation about a dragon egg.

It could become a delicate problem in an instant if not handled properly. Hibiki got agitated.

"Yes, it is the egg of the Waterfall dragon. I am kind of helping it return home." (Makoto)

"Waterfall?!" (Hibiki)

"Senpai? As expected, you got surprised?" (Makoto)

Hibiki lets out incomprehensible words without caring about the eyes of others, something unusual from her.

Makoto talks with fun as if he had heard a joke.

For Hibiki, it was not the time to be surprised.

If Hibiki was really trying to let loose or make a joke to entertain, she probably would be showing more composure than this.

"Why do you have something like that when you were supposed to be in Rotsgard?" (Hibiki)

Controlling her breathing that was about to turn disordered, Hibiki was somehow able to continue her words.

“That was uhm, there were a lot of things going on.” (Makoto)

“...You said that this is the egg of Waterfall. In that case, it will become the child of Waterfall, right? Could it be, there was an idiot who would steal the egg of a Superior Dragon?!” (Hibiki)

“Eh, ah. When I said it was the egg of Waterfall, I didn’t mean it in that way. This is Waterfall itself. A lot happened a time ago you see.” (Makoto)

“Waterfall itself?! Hey now, Makoto-kun, this isn’t a matter that can be wrapped up by just saying ‘a lot happened’, you know? Waterfall is the dragon that lives in the territory of Limia. I am not totally unrelated to this.” (Hibiki)

“Well, that is...if I don’t ask the people here, I can’t say much either. Eh? Wait?” (Makoto)

Hibiki seeks an explanation.

Makoto was wondering how he would tell her, and looked at the direction of the gel.

In that place, there was the appearance of the gel that had changed a part of itself into a hammer.

It seems to be an action that it was doing after telling Makoto, but it seems like Makoto himself couldn’t understand what it was doing.

And then, the gel swung down that hammer.

The hammer arm of the gel hits the egg as if it was natural.

And obviously, a big crack appeared on the egg.

Actually, it should be surprising that it wasn’t smashed completely.

“Safe. Or more like, it is unexpectedly tough.”

“Wait—”

Makoto and Hibiki were looking at it dumbfounded.

The gel didn't do more than that, and was standing before the egg.

A silence ruled the space, and within that silence, the sound of something hitting could be heard.

Hibiki noticed that the sound came from inside the egg.

"This is a joke, right? Are you telling me that it will be born here and now?" (Hibiki)

"Ah, so that just now was to assist on the hatching huh." (Makoto)

Because of the situation, the composure of Makoto and Hibiki did a complete reversal.

They watched attentively just like that.

Finally, with the crack as the center, the thick shell was lifted up.

As it was lifted up, the head peeks out like a chick.

The head of the dragon comes out from the egg.

(Just what in the world happened for a Superior Dragon to suddenly hatch. Makoto-kun doesn't seem to be that agitated. Are you telling me that this unprecedented event is a normal occurrence in his everyday life?) (Hibiki)

(...It is a western style one huh. It is a dragon that has taken a lake as its territory, and is specialized in the water element that is the best at healing, so I was expecting a snake-shaped one though. Is Tomoe the only one that was a snake-shaped dragon? Uwa, even though it hatched just now, the way it is breaking the shell is not cute at all.) (Makoto)

Makoto who was expecting a snake-shaped dragon, saw the head and claws of the dragon, and sees that its silhouette was similar to how the western dragons are depicted, and made a tensionless impression.

The gestures of shaking its head and body to shake the shell off was something that he was expecting, but even though Waterfall was the size of an arm, it was using its claws to break the shell in an incredibly composed manner and coming out from it.

The light in its eyes was not that of innocence or purity, but the eyes that would make one thing are those of an adult.

After Waterfall calmly left from its shell, it begins drawing something in the air with its small legs. In just a few moments after hatching, it was able to exercise magic.

The surrounding egg shells quickly froze, turned into dust, and disappeared.

(So it even does the cleaning itself.) (Makoto)

Makoto was thinking that this dragon kid was seriously not cute.

Waterfall was moving its head to the sides several times as if confirming its state, and it first looks at the mamono.

“You have protected this place well in my absence. It seems like I will have to increase the number of you guys in the future.”

From the mouth of the dragon, fluent common language came out.

(It is even able to talk as soon as it was born. Couldn't it have just come back here on its own? I didn't hear anything about them being like this the very moment they are born. That damn Root... Gel-san is happy here, so well, that's fine.) (Makoto)

Leaving aside the discontent of Makoto, the Gel was trembling more than any moment before, and inside the transparent body of it that doesn't have that much temperature, a number of bubbles were appearing.

And then, Waterfall faces Makoto and Hibiki.

Makoto who has a good amount of Superior Dragon acquaintances like Root and Tomoe, was the same as always; on the other hand, Hibiki's body was stiff.

For Hibiki, this is the first time that she has properly met with a Superior Dragon.

At that time with Lancer, it was a fight, and the one who did most of the fighting was actually Shiki.

It could be said that this is the first time that Hibiki can talk to a Superior Dragon.

“...Raidou, I am impressed that you accepted the request of that free-spirited and troublesome person. I give you my gratitude for returning me to Meiris Lake.” (Waterfall)

“No problem.” (Makoto)

“I want to have a good talk with you later so, can I have your accompany for a little bit longer?” (Waterfall)

“As long as I am able to return by today, there’s no problem. Right, Senpai?” (Makoto)

“Ah, yeah, it is okay, Waterfall...-sama.” (Hibiki)

“Fufufu, I don’t mind you not using -sama, you know? Limia’s hero, Hibiki. Leaving aside if it was actually necessary, I give you my gratitude for guarding Raidou all the way here. I also give my gratitude to the Limia royalty that has been abiding to the contract until now. As a show of my gratitude, I will invite you to my dwelling along with Raidou. It’s been awhile since I have invited people though.” (Waterfall)

“Thank you very much.” (Hibiki)

(What a wise dragon it is. It seems like there’s complicated circumstances, but I have nothing to lose in being able to hear the conversation if only for a bit. Also...it seems like Waterfall thinks something of Makoto-kun too. I stuttered though.) (Hibiki)

“Well then, I am counting on you. Raidou, Hibiki, please just keep a tranquil heart as you are.” (Waterfall)

Waterfall sends a gaze to the Gel.

As if answering that gaze, the Gel inflates its body largely, and expands itself.

Its body opens up as if it were opening its mouth, and after wrapping up Waterfall, Makoto and Hibiki, it dives into the lake just like that.

“In the space between the lake and land, there’s an area where I live in.

We will be arriving soon, so please enjoy the scenery underwater as we wait.” (Waterfall)

The body of the Gel was muddy, but it turned transparent and was made possible to look outside.

A 360° scenery that felt like one of those aquariums, had spread in their view.

(Not the space between the land and sea, but the space between land and lake, huh. Aah, it is great that I had my Magic Armor off. I would have troubled Gel-san when it was wrapping us after all.) (Makoto)

(Calmly, and maintaining one’s spirit constantly cold, you look at the situation. No matter how harsh it is, if you don’t have this margin in mind as you act, you won’t be able to reach the best result. Having a margin is not leeway, but an insurance line. Don’t get impatient. Even if this can affect the current war and what happens after. Even if I am unable to obtain the best result, I won’t give up on obtaining the better result. That’s my current duty.) (Hibiki)

The day in Meiris Lake continues.



The capital Asuta.

Its reconstruction was not looking good.

The royal family’s riches, the noble’s riches, the hard work of the knights and the residents.

Even when they are using their investments in an adequate manner, they are being hindered by the season, and it wasn’t proceeding as they thought.

If the capital had been destroyed to the point of becoming an empty lot, it would have probably made the reconstruction faster.

However, there’s a great number of rubble and gouged paths, and to begin the actual reconstruction, they have to deal with that first.

Moreover, in this world, there’s the existence of mamonos and it is war

time as well, so they had to work in the outer walls first.

Compared to normal towns, it is a pretty fast pace, but in this case with the capital, there was a town that was doing a miracle-like reconstruction at that same period.

Academy Town, Rotsgard.

The scale of Rotsgard Academy and the capital are around the same.

The two were similar in the part that they possessed satellite towns.

But the reconstruction speed of Rotsgard after being destroyed was absurd.

Even though the disaster occurred at the same time, the information of Rotsgard had reached the ears of Asuta as well, and because of their absurd speed in it, the residents and nobles that live in the capital were suspecting that maybe there's some sort of problem in the reconstruction at the capital's side.

In the end, the Limia royal family requested a reconstruction cooperation of Rotsgard.

It is well known that the reconstruction of Rotsgard has a high number of students and magicians working in it, and Hibiki who considered that they should take the same method, stood as a messenger and requested for help.

After less than a few months, the plans will probably differ, but the many students and magicians will probably participate in the reconstruction of the capital.

The fact that they have requested for cooperation was at the same time proof that Rotsgard didn't need that many magicians anymore, and was also showing that it is already returning to its former shape.

In just a few months, a prominent town had climbed up from a disaster, and recovering.

There's no doubt that the revival of Rotsgard will be spoken of for a long time to come.

“They are taking their sweet time here.”

“Rotsgard is just way too fast. It is also because our place is helping out, but that place is a treasure trove of magicians. I think it was a miracle result that was brought out by the good combination of people commanding and people executing.”

“Also, they have the chance to remake it, so they should have made the outer walls at a more distant location, and increase the scale of the inside. Are there no people here that can use their head?”

“...Nee-san, an outer wall is the lifeline of a town. Just rebuilding it is already a high priority task. It seems like this time the foundation was fortunately okay, so it was judged that it would be plenty enough to rebuild as it is.” (Lime)

“...Ah, so that’s why they didn’t move it one inch huh. Even though they should know that they are in a location where they will constantly face the meddling of demons.” (Mio)

“It seems like Hibiki and a number of nobles were contemplating on moving it, but in this situation, it is impossible. If they were to force it, by the time they finish the new capital, who knows how many of the inhabitants would be left.” (Lime)

Being guided through Asuta and seeing the slow reconstruction state, Mio gave an honest advice.

Lime gave a follow-up by saying that in a realistic point of view, Asuta is actually doing a good job, but Mio’s expression didn’t seem to show a single shred of consenting to that.

He was also being careful about the second prince who is silently guiding them to the next location.

Because the words of Mio were definitely heard by him.

No matter if they were told there’s no need to worry about formalities, Lime is not the type who would take those words for granted.

While feeling chills that maybe Mio was trying to buy a fight with

Joshua, Lime was moving about in confusion between those two.

“Mio-dono and Lime-dono seem to have seen the miracle town Rotsgard, so I think it is a plausible opinion. The current situation of the capital is a problem that is hurting our heads, and it is the truth that we are hurrying because of our feelings that we should finish it as fast as possible. The proposal of Hibiki about moving the capital was something that has to be considered, but in the current state, regaining the functions of the capital and the towns, as well as the livelihood of the people was of higher priority, so at this time, we couldn't do it.” (Joshua)

“How leisure. I wonder if you will be able to finish while it is still winter.” (Mio)

Normally, a city wouldn't be able to recover so fast.

It is something that has to be planned for at least a few years.

“We have to at least arrange the looks, no matter what. Ah, you two, it is here. From here, we can climb up on top of the outer walls. I think you will be able to see a different form of the capital from here compared to the castle.” (Joshua)

Just as Joshua said, a part of the outer walls had something similar to a cabin constructed, and from there, a long flight of stairs stretched up.

The three went to the top of the outer wall, and have an unobstructed view of the capital's interior and outside.

“This is... The talk was that people will be coming from Rotsgard, but even so, looking like this, I think it will be taking around half a year before it takes proper form.” (Lime)

“As expected of Lime-dono, a splendid diagnosis. The result of our discussion about the assistance of Rotsgard, was that it would take around that time. Hibiki said that there's still room to make it faster though.” (Joshua)

“By that time, the demon race will be attacking already-desu wa. The logic that the enemy won't attack because you are in the middle of recovering is not possible.” (Mio)

(Mio-neesan. We should stop this topic soon. This is a problem of Limia, and help from Rotsgard will be coming. Even if we stick our head into this matter, well, I don't think it will show a good result. Boss didn't tell us anything either so...) (Lime)

(...Lime, are you looking to be peeled too?) (Mio)

(Peeling?!) (Lime)

(In the first place, just how much do you think Waka-sama has helped in that Rotsgard reconstruction? And in truth, what's most important is to have them understand that very point. Be silent.) (Mio)

(No well, uhm...) (Lime)

(Be silent, okay? I will properly talk to Waka-sama later. It's okay to just match what I say.) (Mio)

(...Understood-ssu.) (Lime)

Unable to stay silent, Lime send a thought transmission to Mio.

But he ended up being shut out himself and curling his tail.

In the first place, the standing and power of Lime and Mio are way too different.

Travelling together with Mio was impossible for Lime.

It could be said that the most he could do was change the direction slightly.

“Well then, does the Kuzunoha Company have a good idea?” (Joshua)

Joshua asks for a suggestion from Mio.

Those words were a given.

“Of course. If you want to, I can show you a bit of it right now.” (Mio)

With a smile, she answers prince Joshua as if nothing.

Seeing this, Lime had his usual expression, but internally, he was rolling around in suffering.

(Uaaah! It is happening again! It is that same smile! Boss, please return

quick! This is impossible, with only me, this is definitely impossible-ssu!!)
(Lime)

Lime didn't know what she intended to do.

Just that...he was sure that she was going to do something.

It hurt.

Lime's stomach was hurting.

"Go ahead please." (Joshua)

With slightly sharp eyes, Joshua said these short words.

"Okay. Ah right, prince Joshua, that section there has a lot of rubble, right? It looks like you haven't worked on that part yet." (Mio)

"We haven't been able to work on that section yet. The part that can be seen at the other side as well, and the part at the left side too. We haven't been able to clear away the rubble yet." (Joshua)

"Are there people there?" (Mio)

"The entrance is currently prohibited." (Joshua)

"Then, is it okay to use magic?" (Mio)

"...Go ahead." (Joshua)

"Fufufu~." (Mio)

Mio didn't say anything.

She took out her folding fan from her bosom, and pointed it towards the place that is still filled in rubble.

Prince Joshua looked carefully at Mio's appearance and the rubble alternately.

Lime was already looking at some place faraway from the rubble and letting out a dry laugh.

"I will be doing it-desu wa." (Mio)

"?!!"

The short words of Mio.

At the place where the folding fan was pointing, in an instant, a dark swirl appeared at the ground and everything was gone.

Being swallowed by the dark swirl, the earth and sand, along with the rubble, had disappeared completely.

Prince Joshua places his right hand at his mouth.

One could easily tell that he was showing surprise.

(She did it. She ended up doing it, Boss... Now, they probably know that the Rotsgard reconstruction speed had something to do with us as well. It is true that it is the place that Boss is living in, and we haven't done much in keeping it a secret, but...I thought that it would have been better to keep it hidden-ssu. Mio-neesan is planning to destroy it, a lot of things.) (Lime)

Lime felt that something else was coming out aside from his long sigh, and the cries of his heart resounded pitifully.

“Also, you said that side over there and the left side was the same, right? Then...” (Mio)

Mio continued onto the other two parts, and erases the rubble.

Even though there were priorities to take care of first, the terrible spectacle that had been left like that for several months, had disappeared in an instant.

“Just what kind of magic can do something like this? Was there a spell like that in the dark element? Also, what's swallowed there...where does it go?” (Joshua)

While looking at the place that had become a completely empty plot of land, Joshua mutters to no one in particular.

“I will be taking it out after this-desu wa. It is okay to let it out anywhere outside the outer walls, right?” (Mio)

Mio answers the mutters of Joshua that were not directed at anyone.

“Ah, yeah...I want you to avoid doing that where the camps are though.”

(Joshua)

Joshua who had lost his courteous way of speaking towards the Kuzunoha Company, had answered Mio as if she were the supervisor of a construction work.

Just that, from the relationship between Joshua and Mio, this way of speaking is no problem at all.

Actually, it could be said that until now, he had been way too courteous.

“So you don’t mind. Then, at that part-desu wa ne.” (Mio)

Mio didn’t show much interest in the change of the prince, and continued speaking.

There’s also the point that she didn’t care about the attitude of the prince as she acted though.

Pointing the folding fan to the outsides of the capital, a dark swirl was created.

In a distant place, rubble, earth, and sand came out one after the other from the dark swirl and as it fell, it made the ground tremble and did a dull sound. It even reached the ears of the three who were at the outer walls.

“What a powerful magic.” (Joshua)

“Powerful? Something of this level, I can do it hundreds of times-desu wa. The rubble and scraps of wood in this place, I would be able to throw it outside in one day if I wanted to. Lime, with this, how much did it shorten the reconstruction time?” (Mio)

“...Right, let’s see-ssu. It probably reduced 2 months of work-ssu.” (Lime)

“Ara ara, how simple.” (Mio)

“Mio-dono, then can you please lend us that power of yours? What you are trying to say is that you will be helping us in the reconstruction of this capital?” (Joshua)

“I will confirm with Waka-sama once he returns, but if it’s just for one

day, there's no problem-desu wa. Waka-sama is not here and I don't have anything to do anyways." (Mio)

"‘Just for this one day’, what great words! Of course, I will be giving a proper compensation. I will bring the one in charge right this instant, so please, do lend us your strength!" (Joshua)

"I don't care about the one in charge, but prince, the condition is that you will be there as well. You will be witnessing what the Kuzunoha Company's Mio will be doing." (Mio)

"If my presence is enough, I will engrave it in my eyes." (Joshua)

The sun was still high up.

It seems like the day of Mio and Lime who were suddenly assisting in the reconstruction work, was still long to be over.

Chapter 208: A long long day in Limia

(2nd Half)

“I was expecting a cave-looking place, but it seems it was completely different.”

“Right. But since it is a water dragon, this might be more fitting actually. It is incredibly interesting.”

Makoto and Hibiki were at the island that is floating at the center of Meiris Lake, in that place, there's a giant temple.

It looked like an ancient greece temple, with stone tiles and stairs, and the material quality of every article that made this place was high.

It made the two feel that this is not a place where people live.

(...The damage is terrible. It would be another case if it were ruins, but this is a dwelling. There's a lot of recent damage made by magic and swords. It seems like the 'a lot of things happening', are pretty violent stuff.) (Hibiki)

The outward appearance and its interior was terribly damage to be called a dwelling.

Just as Hibiki noticed, there was quite a lot of recent damage.

She was certain that there had been a large scale battle in this place.

“Water has been used as a mirror since time immemorial. The special traits of water are a lot more varied than humans can think of.”
(Waterfall)

Waterfall stepped forward first.

She was sitting on top of the Gel type mamono, and turned her head to answer the guests that she had invited.

The Superior Dragon Waterfall's dwelling is at an island at the center of Meiris Lake.

But in the Meiris Lake that Makoto and Hibiki were just a few moments

ago didn't have an island at its center.

Right now, they are at a space of Meiris Lake that Waterfall had created.

Its utilization is quite different from Tomoe's, but Waterfall was a dragon that possessed a space as well.

(Mirror huh. Is it like the world at the other side of the mirror? The scene at the water's surface can be broken by the waves and gives an unstable image, but even though this is small for a space, it feels like it is stable. It resembles Tomoe's Asora, but...could it be that water is the closest to the element of space creation?) (Makoto)

Makoto was comparing the inherent ability of Tomoe -Asora- with the current space that was probably created by Waterfall.

"Waterfall, let me go right to the point. If I were to put it the water element to practical use, can I compose a separate space even if temporary, and retain it?" (Hibiki)

Hibiki was thinking if she could put the water element into practical use to create a separate space she can use as a storage.

If they can make use of it, it would be extremely useful in armies.

They have to rival the demon race in techniques and strategy as much as possible, or the humans will continue suffering hard fights.

It is because she understands this that she made this question.

"Well, I wouldn't say there's no chance, but this temple holds the special characteristic of my water, and it was combined with the power of the Meiris Lake; a result born by chance. It is also the one of the reasons why I live here. In magic, water is indeed one of the elements closest to creating a space, but in terms of the utilization you are thinking of, the one with the highest chance of knowing would be a certain someone that specializes in illusions." (Waterfall)

"Someone that specializes in illusions... It is true that something of this level can't be done easily." (Hibiki)

" ... "

(I feel like she is talking directly about Tomoe. Just how do the memories of Superior Dragons work? She is talking of Tomoe as if she knew of her. Anyways, this place is really different to Asora. Her space is only as big as a lake after all. Also, there's a problem in it.) (Makoto)

Makoto didn't react to the words of Waterfall and was thinking.

He was using Sakai and trying to understand this space.

From the information that was gathered, he learned that this place is simply connected to the real Meiris Lake, and it was different from Asora which can be used for complete isolation if they wanted to.

"Now then, please come in. Fortunately, I am currently in this size. We will be able to talk comfortably here." (Waterfall)

Following the invitation of Waterfall, the place that we arrived at was a courtyard.

A soft bright light was shining, and there's a lake at one's field of vision.

A table and sits were prepared, and there were even cups and a pot.

Makoto and Hibiki took their seats, and Waterfall takes a seat that was raised for herself.

The Gel skillfully grabs the pot and serves what seems to be tea to Makoto and Hibiki. It turns to Waterfall and trembles once before trailing its way out of the courtyard.

"That guy is quite handy." (Makoto)

"He is the one that takes care of my everyday necessities. Because of that incident, they have decreased a lot in numbers though." (Waterfall)

"Is it your familiar? Or maybe a devotee?" (Makoto)

"It is the same relationship as that of 'her' and the Mist Lizards, Raidou." (Waterfall)

"Ah, I see." (Makoto)

Makoto was impressed by the dedication of the Gel.

With an answer that only Makoto would understand, she expressed the

relationship between both.

“...Waterfall, is it really okay for me to be here as well?” (Hibiki)

Making a conversation that she didn't understand as soon as it begins, Hibiki asked in consideration.

She was already given the permission to be there, but it was to confirm just in case.

“Of course. I hold a personal interest in you. Please accompany us here. My conversation with Raidou won't be long, and after, there's also something I want to talk with you about.” (Waterfall)

“...Understood.” (Hibiki)

“Now then, Raidou. It seems ‘that person’ has caused you a lot of trouble huh. Even though the problem has been resolved, it is easy to imagine that the situation would have gotten even worse without your help. With that in consideration as well, I give you my gratitude.” (Waterfall)

“It is not something you have to turn so courteous when saying. Also, the one that was troubled the most was probably Grount-san. I think that it would be better to thank that person instead of me.” (Makoto)

“Grount huh. You went through the White Desert by feet, right? It is certainly true that since I am in this kind of state, I most likely caused a lot of burden to her.” (Waterfall)

“Yeah.” (Makoto)

“Anyways, I think that, as a Superior Dragon, I have to reward you. You probably won't be happy about money and goods, so I have prepared a magic book for you.” (Waterfall)

(A magic book. At times, I feel strong magic power from Makoto-kun, and at times I don't feel anything at all, which I don't understand well. With that attack that dispersed the purple cloud, I should think that he possesses a giant amount of magic power. In that case, a magic book from a dragon could increase his power even more. But I currently have no way of stopping it. How vexing.) (Hibiki)

Hearing the word magic book, Hibiki instantly strengthens her caution.

A strong magician will be obtaining strong spells.

Hibiki understands just how much of a danger that is.

“A magic book. Thank you very much.” (Makoto)

“I think you will be needing it. Please use it for the sake of leading the world to a good path. Of course, I don’t mind if you take a number of them. I will guide you there, so how about checking them out?”

(Waterfall)

“Is that okay?” (Makoto)

Makoto made a honest reaction to the words ‘he is going to need it’.

Waterfall who seemed to understand the situation, told Makoto that she had prepared magic books that he would need.

Obviously he would have an interest.

“Of course. You have accepted my gratitude, and if you will be taking the recompense for it as well, it would only make me happy. At the other side of the courtyard, I have a guide waiting at the pathway along the lake. With this, let’s put a finish to the stiff talk, and I will be speaking with Hibiki for a while.” (Waterfall)

“Sorry for the trouble, and thanks.” (Makoto)

(She feels the most sober out of all the Superior Dragons I have met. Honestly, it derails my pace.) (Makoto)

Makoto stands up from his seat, and advances through the corridor that Waterfall had pointed, and disappeared from the field of vision of Waterfall and Hibiki who were left.

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

Seeing the back of Makoto going away, a silent time between Waterfall and Hibiki began.

“...I understand that you had Makoto-kun leave and wanted to speak

with me about something. Just that, I think that your position is higher than mine and Makoto-kun. Can I ask your reason for this?" (Hibiki)

Hibiki who has been silent until now, looks straight at Waterfall and speaks.

"You are sharp. I am relieved that you are just as I expected you to be, Hibiki. The reason why I wanted to be alone with you, is because I have something to request of you." (Waterfall)

"A request? A Superior Dragon like you...to me?" (Hibiki)

"It isn't something strange. Even a Goddess is requesting of a hero after all." (Waterfall)

"..."

"Just as you can see, I am currently not in a body that can exert much power. In truth, I would have preferred to make contact with you before I turned this way, but an unexpected situation occurred and it couldn't be fulfilled." (Waterfall)

"A lot happened?" (Hibiki)

"Of course, I will be requesting of you, so I will be telling you later. Hibiki." (Waterfall)

"What is it?" (Hibiki)

"Please seal Raidou." (Waterfall)

"!!"

Hearing the unexpected words of Waterfall, Hibiki's breath stops.

Leaving her surprised eyes, she simply waited for the words of Waterfall that should have a continuation.

"Even if I am saying seal, I am not telling you to do anything dangerous. Accurately speaking, I want you to prevent him from growing more than he is now. I want you to be the overseer of this." (Waterfall)

"What do you mean by that?" (Hibiki)

"I think you have already noticed, but that person is incredibly

dangerous. It could be said that he is already a danger to all the existences that live in this world.” (Waterfall)

“...That much?” (Hibiki)

“We –Superior Dragons– normally don’t intervene in the dispute between humans and demi-humans, and we don’t have an interest in it either. Frankly speaking, we don’t care who they glorify in this world. That’s why, leaving aside the Spirits, the Superior Dragons don’t actively take part in the war between humans and demons.” (Waterfall)

“...”

While being well-known as an existence of high power, the Superior Dragons practically didn’t intervene in the war that’s currently happening.

Grount who is giving divine protection to one of the knights of the Empire, is a dragon that provides power to the people no matter if there’s a war or not.

The exception was Lancer, but it is not like he was cooperating with the humans or cooperating with the demons.

Because of the contract with Sofia, both were merely moving for their own objectives.

“But thinking about the humans, demi-humans, and the many races out there in this world, there’s one human that becomes an unprecedented threat to them. That’s Raidou. Misumi Makoto. Depending on his actions, I might have to move myself.” (Waterfall)

“...An unprecedented threat.” (Hibiki)

Waterfall had a thinking that was incredibly close to what Hibiki thought.

That this dragon is perceiving Makoto with the same level of threat she does.

“People change as easy as water, they possess a flexible vessel, and are living beings that can show change in trickery. Normally, I would oversee all this, and even if there were a revolutionist appearing, it would only be

considered as the natural flow. But Raidou is not even that. He will simply destroy. Nothing will be born from him. In the past, present, and future, he will simply destroy. He is the kind of existence that has a strong possibility to do this.” (Waterfall)

(It is practically the same thinking. Makoto-kun won't hesitate in fighting against existences that he has deemed as enemies. And he thinks of life –and most likely his own as well– in an incredibly dry manner. For the sake of resolving the problem, he wouldn't care about eliminating the obstacle. He is a boy that would naturally accept this flow of events. And without thinking back on it, he steps forward.) (Hibiki)

Waterfall had been defeated by Sofia, and was absorbed temporarily into herself.

For Waterfall who has been thinking about making contact with Hibiki, this was a big blunder.

But thanks to that, Waterfall was able to witness the two battles of Raidou against Sofia, and within the egg, she was able to learn a lot through Root's analysis.

On top of that, what Waterfall thought first was to jeer at certain existences that were right beside that person.

‘Just how far are you going to go in order to fulfill your own enjoyment?! Just what do you think of the world, you idiotic bunch?!’

80% was directed at Root, and 20% was directed at Tomoe.

Afterwards, she let out her anger that couldn't turn into words, and was throwing jeers that she had no choice but to not say.

It's been a long time since Waterfall had fallen into a complete state of rage.

That's why Waterfall was grateful for the unexpected chance that Hibiki came to Meiris Lake as well.

And so, she decided to throw away her restraints.

“His past self wasn't like that, he was a normal young man. He probably

didn't have that abnormal nature there's no way of hiding." (Hibiki)

"The possible reason is this world. Being separated from his family and the world that was filled with peaceful common sense, he has slowly shedded off the way of thinking of 'that other world'. Even so, right now it is only on the level of shedding off the thin skin of the egg. His morals and ethics are still alive, so that's probably the remains of the Raidou that Hibiki previously knew of." (Waterfall)

"An abnormal nature that would have been buried if he hadn't come to this world... In other words, he is a person that would have been better if he hadn't come?" (Hibiki)

"Exactly. Thinking about the fact that he should have originally been summoned alone into this world, it could be considered that this situation is a miracle in itself." (Waterfall)

"...What do you mean by that?" (Hibiki)

"The head of the Superior Dragons has a connection with the Goddess. Since it is the information of that person, it should be credible, but originally, the only one that had a connection to this world, was Raidou." (Waterfall)

"In other words, the irregulars are not Makoto-kun, but us who were called here as heroes?" (Hibiki)

"Yes, and from what I guess, that's has probably become some sort of debt inside of Raidou." (Waterfall)

"Debt? Why?" (Hibiki)

Hibiki asks for the basis of that guess.

Hibiki and Tomoki had consented to coming to this world after hearing the situation from the Goddess.

It is certainly true that if given more time, the answer might have changed, but it was a decision they made themselves.

That's why, even if they are irregulars, the fact that they have become heroes isn't something that Makoto should feel indebted for.

“This is only a guess. Finding a suitable time, please confirm it with your own ears. And if it’s actually true...” (Waterfall)

“...You are telling to keep silent about my feelings that: ‘I don’t think anything about it, and that’s just misplaced debt’?” (Hibiki)

“...It is great that you are quick on the uptake.” (Waterfall)

If the person feels debt by himself, it shouldn’t be corrected and utilized instead.

In that sense, the two of them were in sync.

“Honestly, Makoto-kun’s threat level is something that I felt as well. Today it turned into certainty though. I don’t know if I will be able to answer your expectations, but I do think that I must associate with him in a prudent manner.” (Hibiki)

“That’s fine. Don’t let him get used to the battlefield, and make him be as far as possible from the war. If the person himself is satisfied with being a merchant, please help him do it. In present, that’s the best direction.” (Waterfall)

“You don’t have a plan that can solve the root problem?” (Hibiki)

“I have one, but leaving aside him, the people around him most likely won’t consent to it. If possible, that would be the best solution, and it is also what he has gone to check at this moment.” (Waterfall)

“...And that is?” (Hibiki)

“It is simple. The technique for a recalling ritual. For me, that would be the best solution, but...thinking about the current situation, it would be impossible to realize.” (Waterfall)

“Summon? No, a recall?! In other words, a method to return to Japan!! In that case!!” (Hibiki)

Hearing the solution of Waterfall, Hibiki’s eyes glittered in an instant.

Certainly, if it’s that method, Raidou who is not that attached to this world, would not only give his consent, but that way, it will also work as the perfect isolation.

She thought that it was the best method where no one would be unhappy.

But at the same time, it bothered her that Waterfall said it was impossible in a regrettable manner.

“...To accomplish the ritual there’s the need for around a thousand lives, and on top of that, it can only recall. Moreover, it is not a forced one, but a ritual where the person has to consent to in order to actually work.”
(Waterfall)

“A thousand...” (Hibiki)

Hibiki thought that it was a small amount of sacrifices compared to the danger he might cause in the future.

“Raidou has a special companion relationship between many, and the people that have a strong connection with him in this world are not few. It is not a realistic solution.” (Waterfall)

“Are you referring to Tomoe-san and Mio-san?” (Hibiki)

“...Yeah. It is troublesome. About Mio, your companion Chiya probably knows of it already. When you return, you can hear it from her. What I can say for sure is that, whether it is Tomoe or Mio, it will be impossible to obtain consent for the recall. Because even if the residents of this world consent to the recalling ritual, they won’t be able to go to the same world as Raidou.” (Waterfall)

“...”

“Hibiki, listen well. Change him not with battle, but with a different method, and find some way to seal him within peace. Raidou’s vessel for power itself is completely different from you and the Empire’s hero. It can take form suddenly, and trying to oppose it would be a foolish. No matter how big of a vessel humans possess, they won’t be able to take in the whole sea. It goes beyond comparison.” (Waterfall)

“Vessel of power...” (Hibiki)

“Even if we were to put all the power in this world into one, I don’t think

we would be able to realize a battle.” (Waterfall)

“Then, don’t tell me that even the Goddess...” (Hibiki)

“...If it turns into a situation where the Goddess herself comes down to this world and fights...” (Waterfall)

“...”

“This world will most likely be destroyed by its root.” (Waterfall)

“No way.” (Hibiki)

“I am sure of this.” (Waterfall)

“...”

Waterfall is saying this.

That Makoto already has the power to outdo the Goddess.

As expected, Hibiki was unable to easily accept this level of opinion.

She decided to just listen to it as one opinion Waterfall has of Raidou.

“You have learned of both sides of the Goddess’ world, and even with that, you were still able to think about changing it from the inside. That approach of yours struck my heart. Because of my powerless body, I am unable to provide you divine protection or form a pact with you, but I –the Superior Dragon Waterfall– promise to cooperate with hero Hibiki. I will leave this world in Hibiki’s hands.” (Waterfall)

“...I said it before but, why did Waterfall end up in that body?” (Hibiki)

“Ah, I still haven’t explained it, right. Actually, I was killed by the Dragon Slayer Sofia not that long ago.” (Waterfall)

“...Eh?” (Hibiki)

“And then, aside from me, there was also Crimson Red and Darkness Clad. Sofia who had killed us and obtained our power, was half killed by Raidou who didn’t suffer a single injury.” (Waterfall)

“...Eh?!” (Hibiki)

“And then, Sofia was finished by our Head. Being released, we were

looked after by the Superior Dragon's Head, and Raidou is currently delivering them to the several locations." (Waterfall)

"..."

"He has connections with the demon race as well, so I think Hibiki will definitely have it hard. If you were a man, your hair would definitely fall mercilessly. But I believe that if it's you, you will be able to gather all the circumstances, and lead it to the best result." (Waterfall)

"Wa, wait!!" (Hibiki)

Being told truths she didn't know of one after the other, Hibiki had turned into a reaction doll.

With its round eyes, Waterfall was looking straight at Hibiki with a pressure that didn't suit her small body as she cornered her more and more.

"Fuh~, after saying it out, I now feel a bit lighter. It's like something has come off from my shoulder." (Waterfall)

"D-Don't just put it down!! What was that about the demon race?! No matter what I do, we would end up confronting anyways then!!" (Hibiki)

"...Please do your best, Hibiki." (Waterfall)

"You are supposed to be cooperating with me, right? Didn't you say that just now? Isn't all of this something that shouldn't be said now, but at a more earlier stage?!!" (Hibiki)

"Sorry. I was dead all this time, and today I was recently born. Even if I could observe, I wasn't in a state where I could tell you." (Waterfall)

"What's with that...? What's that about being dead, seriously..." (Hibiki)

Hibiki who had stood up from her seat, once again took her seat as if the strength in her legs had given out.

"Even so, Hibiki, you won't break. Your nature is that of a challenger. And you are a genius. Wring out the power of the people to protect this world and the Goddess as well." (Waterfall)

“I wonder why...I feel incredibly tired.” (Hibiki)

“When you return, listen to what the priestess has to say. And then, if possible, try having a bout with Raidou. By doing that, you will definitely understand; what I saw and feared.” (Waterfall)

Hibiki didn't answer Waterfall's words.

She had her head hung down and her eyes closed. Maybe she was trying to understand this situation, or it might be that she is simply exhausted.

She continued staying silent.

“...For now, I will try with the talk about the recall and the convincing. And after that, I will try having a bout. If I have no choice but to do it, I understand I will have to carry this burden as I move forward.” (Hibiki)

(*The one to remove the traveller's clothes wasn't the wind, but the sun; the one who defeated Watounai wasn't a tiger but an old lady, was it*. To think that I would have to do something like this when we are still in war... I feel like I am doing war with both the Kuzunoha Company and the demon race at the same time.) (Hibiki)

“I am counting on you. Ah, try to act as you always do with Raidou.” (Waterfall)

“Because I was the one you told the situation to, you believe that I am able to do it, right? I have somewhat understood your personality.” (Hibiki)

“How reliable.” (Waterfall)

Hibiki stands up and heads towards the library that Makoto went to.

Waterfall got on Hibiki's shoulder and showed her will to accompany her.

“Right, Hibiki. If it's for a short time, I can make myself bigger, so at the time of your return, I will be taking you outside. It will also provide a plus to your name.” (Waterfall)

“Since the circumstances are like this, I will accept anything that can serve as a plus.” (Hibiki)

Thinking about the meaning of returning by riding a dragon, Hibiki accepts the proposal immediately.

Hearing a vast amount of information, she felt that she wouldn't be able to sleep for several days, and a small sigh leaked out.



Riding a giant dragon, Hibiki and Makoto return to the capital.

The big frame of Waterfall that came flying in the sunset sky had surprised the people of the capital, but after learning that Hibiki was riding at its back, they were welcomed with big ovations.

(Eh? There's a lot of rubble outside. The help of Rotsgard shouldn't have come yet, so... Was Mio the one who did it?) (Makoto)

After finishing the delivery of the egg as per usual, Makoto obtained several useful magic books from Waterfall and was in a good mood.

Teleporting from world to world.

Learning of the existence of magic books that have magic formations that could be used for this purpose, Makoto was dazed.

By the time Hibiki and Waterfall had finished their talk and had come to look for him, Makoto was seriously reading through the magic books.

Coming down from Waterfall who had landed close to the outer walls, she said her thanks to Makoto and Hibiki, and just like that, they parted ways and returned to the castle.

It was close to dinner.

Makoto did a meeting with Mio and Lime; Hibiki did an emergency meeting with the Limia king, prince Joshua, and the close aides of the king.

Within the tense atmosphere, Hibiki explains about Waterfall.

Of course, the talk of Waterfall wasn't something that could be readily said, and was unable to explain the dangerous sensation she felt at that moment.

Moreover, Joshua spoke about the assistance in the reconstruction from the Kuzunoha Company, and that made her sigh several times.

On the other hand, Makoto praised Mio for helping out in the reconstruction, and thanked Lime.

He spoke about how he already finished delivering the egg and showed Mio the magic books that Waterfall had given him.

In contrast to Limia's side, this side's conversation advanced in a cheerful manner.

And then...

"Mio-san is the black spider, Onee-chan." (Chiya)

"...Please give me a break..." (Hibiki)

"It is the truth. Also, that person Raidou, uhm, he is in control of that black spider, or keeping her." (Chiya)

"...Hah..." (Hibiki)

"Onee-chan." (Chiya)

"What is it, Chiya-chan?" (Hibiki)

Hibiki went to see Chiya who had woken up.

At today's dinner, it will be Kuzunoha Company, the royal family, and the hero party, who will be participating.

Since they didn't know if Chiya would be able to attend it, it was also a visit to see if she had the will to do it.

She apologized first for having her use the Mind's Eye, but Chiya got angry saying that it wasn't necessary to apologize.

Hibiki didn't want to forcefully ask her about the image she got, but the priestess herself opened the conversation, and Hibiki felt a profound gratitude towards that action, but the contents of it made her face stiffen.

"That Raidou person is definitely a no. Fighting him or even getting along with him is a no. I don't think he as good of a person as he makes it out to be. If possible, don't get involved with the Kuzunoha Company

either.” (Chiya)

“How did that person look to you, Chiya-chan?” (Hibiki)

“...It was a smooth white hyuman shaped image, but inside of him, there was an incredibly disagreeing ‘something’.” (Chiya)

“I have heard about hyuman shaped ones a number of times already, but having something is new.” (Hibiki)

“The white part was slightly cracked. From there, I could see it slightly.” (Chiya)

“Cracked... In other words, the white hyuman shape is the figure he thinks he is...and that has begun to fall apart? But white. Until now, there hasn’t been an image with that color, right?” (Hibiki)

“Yeah, but it was a pure white.” (Chiya)

“Whichever it is, I have understood plenty enough that it is a dangerous image. And that we shouldn’t settle an interpretation of it too soon as well. Thanks, Chiya-chan. You don’t have to look at them with your Mind’s Eye anymore.” (Hibiki)

“...Yeah. But if needed, I will do it again, okay?” (Chiya)

“Even so, Mio is the black spider huh. I did think it was strange that there were no reports of it appearing again after we only encountered it once but...to think that she was an employee in a company, there’s a limit to unexpected. In other words, the opponent that played around with us until the verge of death and left on a whim, saved us in our training and gave us equipment huh. What are we doing, seriously.” (Hibiki)

The self-depreciating mutters of Hibiki at the end had leaked.

Her words had an unusual bitterness in it.

“The person called Raidou is probably stronger than her. And Mio-san didn’t seem to dislike being controlled. Also...” (Chiya)

“Yeah, continue.” (Hibiki)

“That person’s image...had three chains of control. In other words, he

has two other people that are similar to Mio-san.” (Chiya)

“Two huh. Okay. I have a slight idea of who.” (Hibiki)

“I see. As expected of Onee-chan.” (Chiya)

“...Hey, Chiya-chan. Today’s dinner will be with the people of Kuzunoha Company. Will you be able to come? If it is too hard for you, you can eat in your room, you know?” (Hibiki)

“I will go. I have done something rude to them after all. I have to apologize.” (Chiya)

“You aren’t scared?” (Hibiki)

“Souring their mood and having them cause trouble to Limia Kingdom and Lorel Union is something I want even less, so I’m fine.” (Chiya)

The priestess that had an expression that didn’t suit her age, said this firmly.

For a second, Hibiki was in mute amazement, but she soon showed a smile that came from deep inside and nodded.

“Also...after finishing the meal, as a sideshow, I was thinking about... fighting him onc-” (Hibiki)

“You can’t!!” (Chiya)

She cut off Hibiki’s words.

“...It is only a bout, you know? We won’t be fighting to death. This is just my guess but, if he is like that, it is safe. Also, even if it turns dangerous... he is someone that we have to probe no matter what. It is also because someone asked me to, but I think it is necessary too.” (Hibiki)

“That person is far more dangerous than Tomoki-san, you know? This is only a possibility, but maybe even more than the Demon Lord.” (Chiya)

“Yeah, I know. I also share the same opinion, Chiya-chan. I think there’s other methods we can use, but to tell you the truth, I wanted to test a bit.” (Hibiki)

“That person? No, Onee-chan herself?” (Chiya)

“Yeah. ‘I won’t move on self-interest anymore’, that’s what I thought of doing, but I still can’t do it. Throwing my all, I want to learn more about him, about myself.” (Hibiki)

“...Then I will also watch. When you get hurt, I will heal you immediately.” (Chiya)

“Please. I am sorry for being an useless hero.” (Hibiki)

“For me, Hibiki Onee-chan is the best hero-sama, so you are not useless!” (Chiya)

“...I see.” (Hibiki)



“I didn’t think you would be accepting this kind of request. Thank you, Raidou-dono.”

“Don’t mind it. It is something that I have been thinking of as well. To be able to have a bout with hero-sama, it is something I can boast about.” (Makoto)

Two hours after finishing dinner without any incidents.

“The less spectators the better, but making it less than this was impossible.” (Hibiki)

Makoto and Hibiki were about to confront at the place where the knights train, located at the back of the castle.

Just like Hibiki said, there’s few spectators since it is a faraway place.

The hero party, Limia King, prince Joshua, and a number of nobles.

And then, the Kuzunoha Company’s Mio and Lime.

“I don’t mind.” (Makoto)

(After I finish what I want to try, I can just go ahead and lose after all.) (Makoto)

“We will both go seriously and with our all, okay? And when we are finished, let’s have a drink together. You can hold your alcohol, right? It would be a waste not to enjoy this good night, so I will entertain you.”

(Hibiki)

“I can hold it a bit. I will happily accompany you.” (Makoto)

(Senpai looks like she can hold her alcohol really well. I don't think she will force me to drink, so I will just order some tea before anything happens.) (Makoto)

Whether she knows how Makoto feels or not, Hibiki pushes the word that this is a serious match.

On the other hand, Makoto was already worried about the events after the match.

Distance was taken between the two.

Maybe because they took in consideration that Makoto's weapon is a bow, the two of them had taken quite a lot of distance compared to a fight with swords.

“Then...let's begin.” (Hibiki)

“Yes.” (Makoto)

A short exchange.

But the tension in the place increased in an instant.

Hibiki summons Horn from her silver belt, and immediately activates her serious equipment.

Horn and the silver belt that were shining strongly, hid in a small area of Hibiki's body and protected it.

The invisible defensive field that was created by the sacred treasure provided high endurance to Hibiki.

At the same time, her speed is buffed, and the bastard sword she unsheathed stacks even more speed into that equation.

(At any rate, she is a specialist in speed and power huh. Just as I saw in Meiris Lake. The type that if you can't catch her, you can't do anything about. Her defensive power is decent, and that exposure rate is for speed sake. How through, or more like, on top of that, she is using body

strengthening as well. So a full boosted Senpai will be going with her all from the start huh.) (Makoto)

Makoto took his bow into his hands, activated his Magic Armor, and was checking the movements of Hibiki.

And then, he was sure she was a suitable opponent.

After he achieved Creation at the demon race territory, Makoto slightly noticed something regarding his own image.

To test it, there just...wasn't a suitable opponent for it.

Makoto was going to try and test it with Hibiki.

He doesn't intend to take her life.

He doesn't intend to leave her deeply injured either.

Thinking that, Makoto was able to accept the 'serious match' of Hibiki.

(Bows will shoot the arrow straight; leaving aside magic arrows that are created from Brid, if it's a physical arrow, I had a preconceived notion that it worked this way. I think that maybe in this world, I will be able to do even more incredible things.) (Makoto)

"...Fuh!!"

Holding the bastard sword in one hand like that of a Japanese katana, Hibiki swung her sword at Makoto.

(...An Iai?! No, a sword wave.) (Makoto)

The sword wave changed colors faintly and launched towards Makoto.

Of course, that was blocked by Makoto's Magic Armor and disappeared.

However, because of the impact and the dust, Makoto's field of vision was blocked.

"..."

(It was like an Iai. To shoot a sword wave, that's incredibly hero-like.) (Makoto)

Without getting agitated, Makoto lifted his bow and takes an arrow with

his right hand.

With no stance and simply in a standby posture, he waits for the next move of Hibiki.

Attacks struck the Magic Armor of Makoto from the back, left, right, and right again.

(She was able to shorten the distance this much already. She is probably faster than the wolves in Asora.) (Makoto)

He was in a state where his field of vision had not recovered yet, and was exposed to the continuous attacks of Hibiki.

But they were all stopped by the Magic Armor and couldn't reach Makoto.

There was no agitation felt in the sword of Hibiki, the space between the attacks steadily opened, and it felt as if she was analyzing it.

“Ah, there she is.” (Makoto)

“What an incredible defense!” (Hibiki)

Right in front of Makoto was Hibiki.

With her body slightly bend down, she slashes at Makoto without hesitating.

That attack cuts the invisible Magic Armor.

Being endowed with magic power and counting its speed, it was an attack that Makoto couldn't follow with his eyes.

“Even though you have no scabbard, how can you do an Iai?” (Makoto)

“I just use the wind as my scabbard. I feel like I can finally do a proper attack—?!!” (Hibiki)

Hibiki's next attack was crushed before it was activated.

Makoto reformed the arm of the Magic Armor and leaving it to raw power, he struck her to the ground.

Being held down just like that, Hibiki's movements stop.

Even so, she hasn't released her sword.

“Wind as a scabbard? What kind of idea is that?!” (Makoto)

“Guh!! Even though I certainly did feel like it worked, and yet, damn it!!”
(Hibiki)

The Magic Armor of Makoto broke again.

The arm of the Magic Armor that Makoto can see –the arm that was holding down Hibiki– was pierced by something, and from there, the composition of the arm was destroyed.

(Was it shot down? No, Senpai is not using something like that. She did something with her sword. But she is using her whole body and moving well! Restraining her will be hard.) (Makoto)

While being surprised by the unknown powerful attack Hibiki released, Makoto was finally able to grasp the figure of Hibiki in his eyes.

Placing an arrow, Makoto concentrates on Hibiki who's there.

(I was somehow able to disperse that restrain by perforating it. Also, what held me down was probably the defense of Makoto-kun. In other words, if I use a stronger piercing attack, there's the chance that it can reach Makoto-kun. But, is it only at this level?) (Hibiki)

“ ... ”

Makoto adjusted his aim at Hibiki.

At that moment, Hibiki noticed.

(I thought I would be able to evade his arrows, but if I remember correctly, he boasted an abnormal accuracy. And if it's like my Iai that utilizes wind and his ability has been enhanced in this world...it is fine, even if it hits me, I will just have to strike it down the instant it touches my body.) (Hibiki)

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

(I will brush away the arrow and cut down his defense with my Iai.

Without putting any fronts, I will use my all to pierce it. But he is not moving. If he is not going to make any moves...I will just have to bait him to!) (Hibiki)

Hibiki's figure disappears.

Without caring about the presence of the dust, he doesn't try to follow her trace at all.

The speed of Sofia and the speed of Hibiki are completely different.

Hibiki mixes real moves and feints, and utilizes the eyes of the people and their senses to make the other party perceive it in a faster speed than normal.

Just like how Lime saw it for the first time and lifted his hands in surrender, it could be said that it is an incredibly vicious technique.

Different from the time when he was barely able to follow the moves of Sofia, in this case, Makoto had completely lifted his hands in surrender at the speed of Hibiki too.

(As I thought, I can't see her at all. Nice. This is fine. It has to be this way.) (Makoto)

Makoto closed his eyes, and the figure of Hibiki before she disappeared, appeared in his head.

And then, he released his arrow at that image of hers.

Makoto who opened his eyes, felt that his Magic Armor had been destroyed.

The attack of Hibiki had increased in sharpness, and Makoto felt like the power was increasing more and more.

It might be some sort of ability, but for the current him, that was a point that was of no importance.

Without his Magic Armor, Makoto used Sakai without any expectations, and tried to grasp the location of Hibiki.

At that place, there's Hibiki who has an arrow pierced at her right

shoulder.

Maybe because she had stopped her movements due of the pain, Makoto was able to grasp her location.

That's how fast Hibiki was.

And then, she took a surprising action.

"Her left hand?!" (Makoto)

Taking her sword again with her left hand, she forcefully released her trump card sword wave.

The wave of attacks spiralled and advanced in a shape to pierce at Makoto.

Makoto forgot to activate his Magic Armor for a second, and was entranced by it.

(...Doing an Iai with no scabbard, and be able to release a sword wave with that much power... Even though she is already outrageous by being able to do this much against an opponent that she can't attack properly, she is even able to use her sword waves as bullets... Just what's going through that head of hers? Oh right, first of all...) (Makoto)

The piercing attack of Hibiki that had already approached to his very eyes, the Magic Armor can't be completely activated in time.

Only cladding the Armor at his right hand that was free, Makoto decided to take the piercing attack.

Even though it is in an incomplete state, it was an attack of Hibiki that had reached Makoto for the first time.

The right hand that was placed at his front made contact with the sword wave that's clad in Hibiki's magic power.

"...This is...strong!!" (Makoto)

At first, Makoto was thinking about crushing it in his hands, but understanding that it would be hard to do, he tried to shift its trajectory forcefully with his hand.

“!! He stopped the wave with his hand?!” (Hibiki)

“Shiaaa!” (Makoto)

The right hand of Makoto deviated the attack, piercing the ground and making a thunderous sound.

“...”

“Ouch ouch... Sorry but I don’t think that I can fight anymore. I give up.”
(Makoto)

Makoto waves his hand as if in pain.

From that hand, red blood was flowing.

Mio who saw the injury of Makoto, had her brows twitch up, but that’s all she did and didn’t make any move.

“...I also can’t continue it seems. It is a draw huh, Raidou-dono.” (Hibiki)

(I couldn’t tell when it pierced me at all. If it had been in my head, I would have died without knowing what happened. The vessel of power is different huh. For Makoto-kun, I’m not even an opponent that’s worthy of fighting. Being this overwhelming, it even makes my will to compete wane.) (Hibiki)

Hibiki takes out the arrow that was pierced in her shoulder, and a healing light came from the red stain.

Without being able to understand what Makoto did at all.

Makoto practically didn’t move his bow at all and didn’t even turn around, and yet, it ended this way.

The only proper moving he did was when he prepared his arrow, and when he grabbed the sword wave of hers.

Hibiki understood that it was her defeat.

And on top of that, while being irritated by Makoto who looked like he was planning on losing from the very beginning, she declared a draw.

Announcing his defeat after doing something like that and not doing a follow-up attack, even Hibiki didn’t find it pleasant.

While holding bitter feelings inside herself, Hibiki ended the match with Makoto.

(To think that it would even replicate the place it had pierced in the image... I see. The reason why I needed more time in order to increase my concentration was maybe because the difficulty of it was high? Even so, at that time, I was directing it towards the image of Senpai that was at that place, and yet, it hit Senpai who was leaping around the area, just as I pictured. I have finally reached a point that's not archery, but something really sketchy. I don't think this will be enough against the Goddess, but I have gotten a bit of confidence.) (Makoto)

"Hm, this is good." (Makoto)

Makoto mutters lowly.

He was satisfied that what he wanted to do had been realized.

He didn't really mind that the lost he intended to have had become a draw.

Mio was smiling in a satisfied manner while looking not at Makoto, but Hibiki's state. It was hidden by her folding fan, so the only one who noticed that smile was Lime.

And to make it as if he didn't see it, it ended with no one knowing.

And like this, the long day in Limia kingdom has finished.

Chapter 209: The two in the next morning

“You are already fine right, Hibiki?”

“Yeah. I only had an arrow pierced in my shoulder, so it wasn’t that big of a deal. Thanks for visiting me.” (Hibiki)

“Visiting?”

Mio’s words were paused there, and a silence appeared between Hibiki and Mio who were alone in the room.

“Yeah... Was his wound okay?” (Hibiki)

“Something like that, it can be healed at the instant-desu wa. More importantly, Hibiki, it seems like you are doing a lot of moving in the shadows, but after actually acting together with Waka-sama and even having a bout with him last night, you finally understood, right?” (Mio)

“I am not really moving around in the shadows you know, Mio-san. But it is true that I have understood his strength, and that he has strength that even you would follow.” (Hibiki)

Hibiki says these words as if biting them.

Last night, Hibiki had a bout with Makoto.

Of course, it was only a bout for Hibiki, and it was clear that Makoto didn’t have the intention at all.

In the end, it finished with Hibiki being unable to pass a single proper attack and was only able to cause a wound on the level of a scrape, and Makoto hit her in the shoulder with an arrow.

Makoto’s surrender was made a draw by Hibiki, but for Hibiki, it wasn’t a draw nor a win, it was a losing fight.

“That’s no good, Hibiki. Leaving aside the fact that you have understood the power of Waka-sama, you are trying to hide things from me? Even though you were the one that had us stay at the Hopelace territory when we were on our way to the capital.” (Mio)

“No way. A part of the nobles made a strong interference in the

invitation we did to your Kuzunoha Company, and the visit to the Hopelace territory is a result of that. In the point that I was unable to stop it, I do hold a part of the responsibility.” (Hibiki)

“...Then, are you saying you don’t know anything about what happened there? That’s what you are trying to say, right?” (Mio)

“...Yes. At least me and the royal family don’t. Did something happen?” (Hibiki)

“Hibiki.” (Mio)

“What is it, Mio-san?” (Hibiki)

“In our eyes, you, the royal family, the local nobles; all of them are the same Limia Kingdom. That’s not going to work as an escape route.” (Mio)

“ ... ”

Hibiki’s throat moved delicately.

It was a small movement of gulping.

“Investigate it. Something of that level is of no problem, but this will be a new debt for you.” (Mio)

“...Understood.” (Hibiki)

“And? From what I heard of Waka-sama, you are intelligent, right? I heard you are a genius that can do anything.” (Mio)

“Wait, what is Makoto-kun putting in Mio-san’s head?” (Hibiki)

Hearing the words of Mio, Hibiki was taken by surprise for a second, and the tension fell from her face. At the same time, she muttered a complaint to Makoto.

“Haven’t you understood Waka-sama and the Kuzunoha Company already? Let me hear your point of view.” (Mio)

“ ... ”

“Go on. Lately, I have been scattering a lot of hints, you know? If you don’t understand after all this, I can make it even easier to understand. Maybe there’s the need to do something that no matter how much you

want to turn away from it, it will be engraved in those eyes of yours.”

(Mio)

“!!”

“Hibiki... What is Waka-sama? With the information you have gotten, what was the answer you arrived at with that nice head of yours. Tell me.”

(Mio)

Mio’s words reverberated coldly in the room as if signaling a last warning.

Hibiki was hesitating about something, but as if resigning, she looked straight at Mio.

“Raidou –Misumi Makoto-kun– is...” (Hibiki)

“ ...”

“The Devil. He is the Devil himself. And also the white guy that saved me in Limia.” (Hibiki)

Hibiki’s low but confident words made Mio break a smile.

In her mouth and eyes.

Mio was laughing satisfied.

“Nicely done. That’s right, Waka-sama is the existence called Devil by you guys. And the master of the Kusunoha Company.” (Mio)

“I had an idea since before. In the time at Meiris Lake it became even deeper, and at the mock battle, I was confident of it.” (Hibiki)

“It was worth having you accompany Waka-sama. And it was also worth giving that suit to the Rembrandt girl.” (Mio)

“The new equipment that the Kusunoha Company created, right? The SFX hero suit that the girl called Yuno Rembrandt was using. As I thought, it was a deliberate leak of information huh.” (Hibiki)

“Of course. I wanted you to arrive at the thought that Waka-sama is the Devil, and also the person that had saved you after all.” (Mio)

“I was saved by him twice, huh.” (Hibiki)

“That’s right. The first time, he even received grave injuries in his sacred body; the second time was a deal with the Goddess though. But as a result, in both of them, Waka-sama saved you.” (Mio)

“Yeah, that’s true.” (Hibiki)

“Then show an attitude appropriate of your benefactor. Looking at Waka-sama, you should have understood well, right? He doesn’t wish for war. The reason he saved you two was only because you are people from the same world.” (Mio)

“...”

“Listen well, I won’t tell you to cooperate. I am only telling you to stop any sort of action that interferes with the Kuzunoha Company. Also, if something happens within the range you can detect, stop it. Waka-sama is simply trying to bring good to the people after all.” (Mio)

What Mio said at the end made Hibiki’s brows narrow.

“I wonder about that.” (Hibiki)

“What did you say?” (Mio)

“As a company, he is really providing good things at a cheap price. But is that all he is trying to achieve in his actions?” (Hibiki)

Hibiki objected.

That’s also something she thought about after seeing a part of Makoto, and if the Kuzunoha Company really only has those intentions, then there’s parts that contradict this from the way the company acts, that’s how she felt.

“If it’s as Mio-san says, why does he increase his fighting power to that degree? If he wants to go on as a simple merchant, isn’t it plenty enough with just Tomoe-san and Mio-san? I don’t think he was so strong from the very beginning. The Empire hero and I were reasonably strong, but thinking about his ability when he was in the previous world, he should have been about the same as us or less. And yet, he clearly has obtained an abnormal power different from ours.” (Hibiki)

“Waka-sama was thrown into the border of the world. It was a result brought by necessity.” (Mio)

“Are you saying that that necessity won’t lead to war?! It is certainly true that I didn’t feel ambition from him, but he does bring doubts that maybe he has some sort of scheme.” (Hibiki)

“You, even when you have spoken with Waka-sama, you are still thinking such stupid things?” (Mio)

“...I did talk with him. However, my anxiety towards him won’t disappear. That strength and way of thinking is just way too different from that of a person that was supposed to have been raised in modern Japan, in a normal family. I want to ask you this Mio-san, is it really okay for Makoto-kun to change like that?” (Hibiki)

“There’s no need for you to mind about something like that. Waka-sama can change as he sees fit, and if he wants to change, he can just do so. I will simply follow him. If I am asked, my answer will obviously be ‘everything is okay’.” (Mio)

“...I still can’t answer you about how I will interact with the Kuzunoha Company and him.” (Hibiki)

“...Hibiki.” (Mio)

“There’s! There’s still time. There’s also still time to learn more of him.” (Hibiki)

“...I see. Right. I will wait for a bit more. If you want to speak with Waka-sama for a bit more, I will accept it. But it will only be talking.” (Mio)

“I understand.” (Hibiki)

“Fuh~. What a pain. By the way, Hibiki, you already know that I am a spider, right? That priestess has woken up, right?” (Mio)

“That’s—!! Yes, I know. I heard that you are the Black Calamity Spider. So it was true.” (Hibiki)

Mio suddenly reveals her identity to Hibiki.

Hibiki who didn’t expect her to announce it in this timing, was slightly

agitated, but she admitted it.

“Fufufu, I am interested in what that priestess saw in Waka-sama, but I will leave that enjoyment for later. Well then, taking that premise into consideration, I will give you one piece of info.” (Mio)

“Info?” (Hibiki)

“You said the power of Waka-sama was abnormal, but that personage had encountered me as a spider when he was merely two weeks into this world.” (Mio)

“?!”

“There will be gaps in power appearing between you and the Empire’s hero. Those gaps may be 10 days worth or maybe one month, but from what I know, Waka-sama came later than you two.” (Mio)

“Then, you are telling me that, with practically no experience, he fought with Mio-san, no, with the Black Calamity Spider?” (Hibiki)

Hibiki thought it was impossible.

After coming to this world, she got used to battle and obtained trusty companions, but even if she fought with the spider that had been in so many battles, the result would be obvious.

“Yeah.” (Mio)

“Ah...I see. Tomoe-san was also there, right?” (Hibiki)

Within the agitation, Hibiki remembers the order in which Makoto met his followers.

In the past, Mio had told Hibiki that she met Makoto after Tomoe.

“Waka-sama fought alone against me.” (Mio)

“No way.” (Hibiki)

“He did receive some injuries, but he defeated me. At that time, the Black Calamity Spider ceased to exist in this world.” (Mio)

“Then, he had that crazy power since the beginning? Without any relation to the Goddess?” (Hibiki)

“Who knows. Just that, Hibiki, I have practically no memories of when I was a spider, but when I investigated a bit to see...” (Mio)

“...”

It seems like my encounter with Waka-sama happened a few days after fighting you guys. Since that time on, the gap between Waka-sama and you has simply increased more and more. Think very very thoroughly about this truth.” (Mio)

“...”

Hibiki was shoved the difference in power between her past self and Makoto.

“Of course, by the time we are in this country, that is.” (Mio)

Just like how she came in, Mio melts into the darkness and disappears.

Hibiki who was left there, still didn’t move.

‘The gap continued increasing’, those words of Mio were echoing in her head.



“Hm?”

“...Is something the matter, Boss?” (Lime)

“You know, Lime.” (Makoto)

“Yes?” (Lime)

“Can you attack me for a bit? It is fine to not hold back.” (Makoto)

“...Yes?” (Lime)

Opening and closing the hand that Mio healed, I was pondering something.

Since Lime had returned to the room just at the right time, I asked him to do something, but well, he did a predictable reaction.

“No you see, last night I did a friendly match with Hibiki-senpai, or more like, a bout or well...anyways, we did that, right?” (Makoto)

“Yeah...” (Lime)

“Honestly, I had already seen what Senpai could do at Meiris Lake, and it was mostly what I had expected, but...” (Makoto)

“But, what?” (Lime)

“How to say it, from time to time, she was unexpectedly strong. In terms of defense, I didn’t do much, so I think Senpai was the one who was probably doing something. Just that, in truth, I don’t have an accurate idea of the current state of my defense.” (Makoto)

“A-Are you saying that you didn’t put much into that defense?” (Lime)

“And well, returning to what I said in the beginning, I was wondering what would happen if it was an attack of Lime. Please, give it one attack.” (Makoto)

“W-We are doing it here?!” (Lime)

“Yeah.” (Makoto)

Even if we get slightly injured, we can just wait for Mio to come.

If it’s a light wound, I can just have Lime heal it.

There’s no need to go through the trouble of going outside and gathering attention.

Maybe Lime saw my behaviour and noticed that my will won’t be changing, he was worried for a bit, and then took his katana in hand.

“...I really am going to do it without holding back, okay? Even so, I don’t think it will reach the level of Hibiki though.” (Lime)

“You don’t have to mind that. Also, the weapon you have in hand is better, right? Even if something happens, I will have Mio do something about it, so just concentrate in giving your best attack.” (Makoto)

“You will do a follow-up for Mio-neesan, right?” (Lime)

“Of course. After asking you to do it, I won’t go asking her to save me.” (Makoto)

“Then, excuse me.” (Lime)

Lime unsheathes his katana.

Bending his legs, he lowers his posture, and grasps the katana in his right hand, with the blade facing up.

It is the stance for a thrust.

I was the one who asked for it, but I am grateful for Lime who is listening to it and doing it with his all.

It is because, in my memory, his preparation motions are the same as the stance of the attack with the highest power he has.

Just like that time with Senpai, I activate the Magic Armor.

Lime who didn't move from his place, was accumulating power steadily.

As a charging technique, the longer it accumulates, the stronger it gets, since he doesn't have to worry about the charging, it is the best kind of attack.

“Whenever you want.” (Makoto)

Lime didn't answer.

Instead, magic power leaked from his body, and it looked like it shone lightly.

And then, Lime silently kicked the ground and pushes the power from his legs, waist, and shoulders, into his katana.

The amplified power converged into the katana and tried to pierce through the Magic Armor.

But...

“!!!”

Without any high pitched sound of contact, the katana of Lime stopped at a space slightly apart from me.

As I thought, even Lime's full power was unable to cut through it.

Is what I was thinking, but at that moment, Lime made an action further than that.

He released his right hand from the handle in an instant, and this time, he uses his left hand's palm to push the end of the handle.

From his left hand, a massive amount of magic power flowed, and at the same time, it was pushing through.

A second stance to a charging attack!

That's probably incredibly cool.

But the Magic Armor didn't break.

"Ah."

"Geh."

Mine and Lime's voice came out at almost the same time.

The reason is probably the same.

The katana of Lime trembled slightly, and...the blade broke into pieces.

Acha...

So it was unable to withstand being in between the attack power of Lime and my Magic Armor huh.

"S-Sorry, Lime." (Makoto)

"...Don't mind it. Well, fortunately, I don't think there will be any event where I will have to use this in our time in Limia, so don't let it bother you." (Lime)

"In how much time does it restore?" (Makoto)

"If it goes well, around half a day. This time there's no need to hurry, so I think about a day. If there's something necessary today, I will just use a spare sword-ssu." (Lime)

Saying that, Lime shows one of the rings that he is wearing in his hand.

Ah, if I remember correctly, he did say that he has a lot of preparations done.

That ring can turn into a sword, right.

There's a reason why Lime and I are not in such a grim mood.

As long as the handle remains, the regeneration ability is pretty fast.

It seems like even if it's done slowly, it can take one day to return to normal.

I didn't know about how much time exactly, but it is pretty fast.

"More importantly, Senpai was able go through my defense pretty easily with a weaker sword. Lime, do you have an idea why?" (Makoto)

"I don't. The current training Hibiki has is with the sword waves she utilizes for long-ranged attack, but...when it comes to its power, I can only think of it as being common. Compared to when I was accompanying her, she didn't seem to be doing anything different either." (Lime)

"I see... In that case, maybe it is the divine protection she received from the Goddess." (Makoto)

"It seems like that decorative belt was something that was given by the Goddess-ssu. She said the method of utilization is an original of hers though." (Lime)

"Utilization? Are you talking about that radical exposure method?" (Makoto)

I have gotten slightly used to it, but...that's...incredible.

Senpai is incredible for being able to utilize it because her battle power increases, and it is also incredible that it is an ability that actually increases her power.

But as expected, the most incredible part is the looks.

Yeah.

"Against that increased speed, I honestly feel it is hard to find a way to deal with it-ssu. 'If she doesn't take a single attack, there's no need for armor', is what a part of the adventurers discuss stupidly regarding it, but if they are at that level, they can spew all they want but they wouldn't be able to actually make it true." (Lime)

"Hm? In that case, the exposed mode Senpai doesn't have much defensive power?" (Makoto)

“No. Even when Hibiki has obtained that much speed, she hasn’t forgotten the importance of defense. In that appearance, she has more defense than normal, but it seems like its defense loses against the people that are specialized in attack power, so she currently condenses the defensive field that envelops her whole body and enhances it.” (Lime)

“So instead of receiving the strong attacks, she stops them in a specific point huh. It is totally opposite of me who has abandoned stopping it and has chosen to receive them directly.” (Makoto)

I feel like as a skill, the one of Senpai has a higher difficulty.

She increases the defensive power of one point, but it will be a manual defense.

In other points, her defensive ability is on a godlike level though.

...How picky.

“What are you...doing...Lime?” (Mio)

“Hiiih!!” (Lime)

“Ah, Mio. Welcome back.” (Makoto)

“I am sorry for not being by your side because of some business. And Lime, what were you doing?” (Mio)

“This is...” (Lime)

“I don’t mind if you give me an explanation later. I will be calming down first so...come.” (Mio)

“Y-You are going to calm down, right? In that case, I don’t think I am needed.” (Lime)

“What are you saying? In order to calm down, your presence is necessary or I won’t be able to, right?.” (Mio)

You are the one that’s saying weird stuff, Mio.

Lime is giving out an aura of defeat and is in a state of horror.

Can’t be helped.

“Boss!” (Lime)

“It is okay, Lime. I will properly heal you back to normal.” (Mio)

“Heal?!” (Lime)

Mio who had gotten close to Lime, grabs him with her slender hand.

It looks as if he would be able to break free from it, but in truth, it has quite the strength behind it.

No wait.

I did say I would do a proper follow-up, so I have to keep my promise.

Also, I would prefer if Mio were to attack me with those current rampant feelings of hers.

“Mio, stop. Lime listened to a request of mine, so we were just doing a little testing here. That’s why, it is fine.” (Makoto)

“...A test?” (Mio)

Mio stops moving.

But her hand was still grabbing Lime.

Of course, the face of Lime didn’t show any sign that he felt he had escaped from danger.

Actually, he has a face that says he is in incredible danger.

“Yeah. Mio, help out as well. Just for a bit, I would like you to...right, can you attack me with your prided slicing fan?” (Makoto)

With that folding fan, she shoots an attack.

She really came out with another absurd thing, so I retorted by calling it slicing fan, and it seems she liked it, she decided to call that technique of hers in that way.

“Use Slicing Fan on Waka-sama?” (Mio)

“Something bothered me about the fight with Hibiki-senpai you see. Please.” (Makoto)

“With Hibiki... I understand. If it’s that, I will accept-desu wa.” (Mio)

Lime was finally released.

I thought I would need more convincing, but lately, when Hibiki-senpai's name comes out, she becomes pretty obedient.

"Well then, here I go." (Mio)

Just like Lime, without caring that we are indoors, Mio points the closed folding fan at me and swings it.

"Thanks Mio." (Makoto)

I receive the wave of attacks from Mio that had different degrees of power with my Magic Armor, and after continuing until it was broken, I give my thanks to Mio and finish the test.

"Is it okay already?" (Mio)

"Yeah. I have understood that the sword of Hibiki-senpai is around this level of power after all." (Makoto)

"...Are you referring to the attack that injured Waka-sama's hand that time?" (Mio)

"It also has to do with that attack, but in general, Senpai's attack were strangely strong. And in truth, the last attack Mio did was a pretty serious one, right?" (Makoto)

I ask Mio who I thought did an attack with about the same power.

"I didn't even use 80%-desu wa. I wasn't serious at all!" (Mio)

An over 70% of Mio is plenty strong, most likely.

Even if I think that way, I won't say it though.

Because it seems like Mio is also bothered by it.

My Magic Armor was cleanly chopped off, and I ended the test.

Since it would turn out the same as the mock battle, I considered it was plenty enough for the test.

"As I thought, the speed was obviously good, but...there's something behind the strength of those attacks. I feel like I will have to go a bit

stronger when doing a bout with Senpai or I will end up wounded.”
(Makoto)

“...When Hibiki was struggling in the wasteland, she didn’t have a unique attack power like that. She was a girl with good instincts and a wide field of vision though. If I remember correctly, Shiki said that in the time that he was with Waka-sama in Limia, she was suddenly able to release a strong attack. How about confirming with Shiki when we return?” (Mio)

“Ah...maybe he is talking about the time when his the barrier he was keeping them in was destroyed? I see...” (Makoto)

Could it be that a new power she received from the Goddess awakened?
That really sounds like a hero-like development.

It didn’t seem like she was using any special spell to buff herself, and there’s also the chance she activated a stealth type skill like my Sakai.

In that case, I can’t underestimate her too much.

“But that girl, did she really obtain that much attack power? Even with that, she asked for a new weapon...” (Mio)

“Mio? What’s wrong?” (Makoto)

“N-No, nothing! It is nothing-desu wa!!” (Mio)

“Now that I think about it, that business you were talking about...if I remember correctly, the only plans we had were to meet with a number of nobles and merchants and that was all, right? Could it be, you were meeting with Senpai?” (Makoto)

Mio with Hibiki-senpai...

Well, thinking about what happened in Rotsgard, I am indeed uneasy, but in Tsige, they were in a master-disciple relationship temporarily, so I shouldn’t worry about it too much.

“I was only doing some small talk about the time when they were in Tsige. Ah right! Hibiki said that soon we will be able to speak with the priestess.” (Mio)

“With the priestess-san. That’s...great. I did think about paying her a visit at least once before leaving.” (Makoto)

“Yeah, I think it will be possible.” (Mio)

Also, that priestess-san saw something in Mio and I.

It would be a lie to say I am not interested in it.

Leaving aside if she will actually tell us, I want to at least try asking.

Well, she is a girl that’s not so far apart in age from Rinon, so I obviously don’t intend to force her.

Now then, it is almost time for an official to come.

It will be the time when I say that I want to leave with the company for now and give a reply at a later date.

I will not be giving a different answer anyways, so it would be good if they just take the hint and give up though.

Hah...I haven’t even checked the town around the castle properly.

Chapter 210: The counter-plan goes astray

“Kuzunoha company’s peddling permission?”

“Yeah, he has saved my and his Majesty’s life in Rotsgard. We called him here to give our gratitude, so doing nothing won’t do. Raidou made a petition himself, and it isn’t a subject that needs any heavy regulation, so I have given him a response geared towards accepting.” (Joshua)

“I see.”

“Is there some sort of problem? A number of nobles that want him to make a store will probably be unsatisfied with this decision, but it shouldn’t be disadvantageous for us.” (Joshua)

“Yes, I think Joshua-sama’s thinking is correct. If he wished for it, it should be appropriate as an expression of gratitude.”

“It makes me happy that Hibiki says so as well. But well, the fact that this is currently the only request of Raidou makes me feel troubled though. It would actually make me feel more at ease if he were to ask for land or a peerage.” (Joshua)

A conversation with Joshua and Hibiki.

The conversation was about the Kuzunoha Company.

The promise that Joshua made to Raidou about the permission for the peddling the Kuzunoha Company did on the territory.

The two were talking about that matter.

Bredda was also there, but as of now, he hasn’t joined the conversation.

“He probably thinks he has obtained plenty enough compensation.”
(Hibiki)

“No way. To say it is plenty enough when he saved the king and prince of a major power, there shouldn’t be a person who thinks in that way.”
(Joshua)

“...If it’s him, it is possible. He is that kind of person.” (Hibiki)

“It is certainly true that Raidou has an uhm...a kind way of thinking, that doesn't fit a merchant. But even he should have some sort of avarice. I would also like to recompense him a bit more. It wouldn't be good to leave strange lingering discomfort after all.” (Joshua)

“You wanted to say he has a naive way of thinking, right Joshua-sama? That's actually right, you know.” (Hibiki)

“Even so, that's not a word that should be directed towards someone that has saved my life, Hibiki.” (Joshua)

Hibiki restates the words of Joshua who chose his words.

Joshua rebukes her, but there was no stormy atmosphere between the two.

Bredda was silently drinking tea.

It was easy to see that this is an usual occurrence.

“What are Joshua-sama's thoughts about how we should associate with them from now on?” (Hibiki)

The true meaning of Hibiki's question was not to ask the opinion of Joshua's personal opinion only, but to include the king's stance, and the will of the nobles.

Joshua is the advisor of the king, and the number of people that think his opinion is the opinion of the king are not few.

“He himself is someone that doesn't hold evil intentions. The strength they have as a company and the ability of its employees can become a threat depending on the sides it takes, but in basis, I think I want to build a favorable relationship. It is clear that it is not simple peddling, and in reality, the contribution Mio-dono achieved outside her schedule in the reconstruction was splendid. It seems like they have cooperated with the reconstruction of Rotsgard as well, but from what I see, they probably have done more of their part in the work than a simple cooperator. I was about to overlook that part in the report that I had gotten.” (Joshua)

“Rotsgard has already regained its former form and is advancing to a

step further than that. It is saddening, but the speed to stand back up was clearly different from the capital. There's no doubt the Kuzunoha Company played a big part in it. Just looking at their achievements, it is truly an appealing existence, but..." (Hibiki)

Anguish shows in Hibiki's face.

"As I thought, there's problems too huh. In my eyes, they look like partners that can become extremely beneficial though... Then, from Hibiki's viewpoint, how does he look to you?" (Joshua)

"Right now it is hard to put it in clear words but...there's a few points." (Hibiki)

"I don't mind. Let's hear it." (Joshua)

"First of all, he doesn't have an interest in the war that's currently occurring in the world. On top of that, even though he is the Head of a power that can be considered a nation, he doesn't have any intentions to gain more than what he personally views. It is incredibly unstable, and engaging them carelessly is way too dangerous." (Hibiki)

"Assuming that there are a number of other people that have the same power as Mio-dono in the Kuzunoha Company, and taking Raiou-dono's power into consideration as well, then not only a mercenary group, they would possess a military force akin to a nation. I consider it is proper to think of them to be in a nation level. But what's that about not being interested in the war? I don't understand the part about being unstable either." (Joshua)

"It means exactly as I have said. He has the notable characteristic that no matter how much the humans, demi-humans, and demons do war with each other, he won't care. Also, he has no discrimination towards the demi-humans, and it is possible that if asked to provide accommodations because of troubles...they would most likely sell goods even to the demon race." (Hibiki)

"No way! That's an act of betrayal towards humans!"

Bredda speaks out for the first time.

While they are doing business in the hyuman country, they sell goods to the demon race.

Thinking about it from the common sense of Bredda –no, from the common sense of a hyuman, it is an inconceivable act.

“...Even to the demon race? He didn’t look like he had such a lack of integrity though.” (Joshua)

Joshua narrows his brows at the opinion of Hibiki.

Because in Joshua’s eyes, Raidou didn’t look like a person that would sell goods to the demon race for profit.

“...It is not that there’s no integrity in profit. In that sense, I actually think he is loose. The point of beingr troubled is what plays a big part.” (Hibiki)

“For example, no matter the cause, if there’s a demon race village that was unable to secure food supply in winter and there’s a request for help, they would help them out even if it is a situation where even payment is doubtful?” (Joshua)

“Yeah. Of course, even if there’s a request for help similar to that from hyumans or demi-humans, they would most likely reach the same decision. He is...kind, after all.” (Hibiki)

“As a result, the war would grow longer...and a great number of lives would be lost, bringing ruin to the world as a whole, and yet, he would still do it?” (Joshua)

“He is kind after all. If there’s someone in trouble, no matter if hyuman or demon, he would most likely save them. Demi-humans wounded by hyumans, hyumans that were wounded by demi-humans...without discrimination.” (Hibiki)

“...I see. It is certainly true that Raidou-dono gave that kind of feeling. The part that he would choose help over profit. If in his mind, hyumans and demons are equally worthy of saving, they will become an incredibly troublesome existence.” (Joshua)

“Yes. For humans and demons alike, they will become an exceedingly dangerous existence.” (Hibiki)

“It is so sudden it is hard to believe, but since it is something Hibiki says, it is worth considering. If they are contributing to the demon race in the same manner as with us, it would not be good. But...even if that's truly the case, we still have no choice but to continue with our current way of interacting. I see, so this is what's troubling you, Hibiki.” (Joshua)

Joshua continued his words as he thought about the methods that can be taken with the Kuzunoha Company, and then, he noticed the reason for Hibiki's heavy expression.

“...Yes. We have no choice but to have a favorable relationship with them. If they are an existence that brings benefits to both sides, we have to get involved with them as well.” (Hibiki)

The expression of Hibiki was still bitter, and it was comprehensible.

If it's an existence that they can expect benefits in being involved with, even if they bring benefits to the enemy as well, they have no choice but to be involved with them as well.

Even if they are dangerous, as long as they don't have a clear countermeasure for them, they won't be able to break the deadlock, and continue with how their relationship.

“Fufufu, right. There's no reason for us to throw away that benefit ourselves. And in truth, in this time's visit, we have utilized them plenty after all. And yet, they are being taken as a threat. It is truly a misfortune.” (Joshua)

Joshua laughs in a self-deprecating manner.

The visit of the Kuzunoha Company has several objectives they have not been told about.

Thinking about that, a smile unconsciously came out.

“I will try to convince him at least. If...he were to side with us, it would solve most of the problems without doubt after all.” (Hibiki)

“It is written all over your face that you don’t think it will go well.”
(Joshua)

“Honestly speaking, I don’t have the confidence. His sense of worth is already a lot more different than mine. I don’t know if we will be able to reach an understanding.” (Hibiki)

“I pray for your success. I want to continue having a good relationship with him after all.” (Joshua)

“Regarding that, I heartfully agree as well. It is someone I definitely wouldn’t want to be in trouble with after all.” (Hibiki)

“Someone you definitely don’t want to be in trouble with huh. Well, fine then. Regarding Raidou, I will leave the decision making to you. Well then Hibiki, you won’t mind if I advance things just as we have discussed, right?” (Joshua)

“Yes. I was meddled a bit by Mio-san, but there won’t be any problems. Let’s continue with it in one go.” (Hibiki)

“Understood.” (Joshua)

The talk finished, and Hibiki stands from her seat.

Joshua also stood up a second later, and sees her off.

Bredda was about to leave the room following Hibiki as if natural, but at that moment, he was called from behind.

“Bredda, there’s something I have to talk with you about.”

“Hah?” (Bredda)

Being in a different pattern from normal, Bredda let out a dumbfounded voice.

There have been times when Bredda has been in presence of the conversation between Hibiki and Joshua, but there’s never been something after that.

He was with the thoughts of only accompanying Hibiki, so it is an expected reaction.

“Ara, then I will be going ahead.” (Hibiki)

Hibiki didn't show any special surprise and leaves promptly.

“Wai-, Hibiki?!” (Bredda)

The door was ruthlessly closed.

“...Seriously, what do you want, Joshua?” (Bredda)

Because Hibiki was now gone, Bredda returns to his sibling way of speaking and takes seat in a slightly violent manner.

He asks for Joshua's business.

“Brother, I have established several occasions for this kind of meetings, but you haven't participated in any of them properly, right?” (Joshua)

“I am present only as a knight and a bodyguard of Hibiki. In the first place, I am not in a position to say my opinion.” (Bredda)

“Because there was the will of the king as well, I have given tacit consent to brother's attitude until now, but with the capital in this state, I can't just leave it as always.” (Joshua)

“...Listen here Joshua...” (Bredda)

“Isn't it time to be thinking about the ruling of the country? Not as a knight, nor a party member of Hibiki's, but as the successor of father.” (Joshua)

“...You are talking about that? I have decided to be the shield of Hibiki as a knight. If it's about the throne, you succeed it. If it's Joshua, there's no one who would be against it.” (Bredda)

“I don't have the gift to be a ruler. In this time of war, the role of the king is to encourage the whole country, and the one who is the most fit for that role of being the king of Limia is you, brother. In the first place, I have already abandoned the succession of the throne.” (Joshua)

“It is just fine to say you want it back. In the first place, me being the decoration and you being the counsellor is not that different from you being the one directly doing things. I refuse being a simple decoration

hanging.” (Bredda)

“Abandoning the succession of the throne is not something as simple as that you know. Also, if you are able to fulfill the role of a decoration, then in a sense, it can be considered a talent for being king.” (Joshua)

“But I have been telling you haven’t I? I want to be of use to Hibiki—” (Bredda)

“If you think that way, why can’t you understand that being the next king is the best move?!” (Joshua)

Bredda tried to finish the conversation in the same note, but today was different in all senses.

Interrupting his words, Joshua shouted.

At the same time, Joshua hits the table and a loud sound reverberated in the place.

“...What did you say?” (Bredda)

“Looking at the current Hibiki, you should be able to tell. She is already in a territory that a normal person can’t catch up to. That’s right...there’s already no way for brother to become the shield of Hibiki! When in the party, the most you can do is guard the priestess and Wudi, right?!” (Joshua)

Watching the mock battle of Raidou, Joshua was able to understand plenty enough that Hibiki’s strength had already surpassed the line of normal.

She clearly had a strength that went a different path from that of a strong adventurer.

The same could be said for Raidou, but it was evident that it was a different dimension from the trained strength of Bredda.

“Joshua, you...what are you trying to...” (Bredda)

“Brother will definitely become shackles for Hibiki in time, that’s what I am trying to say. Before turning into that, I am advising you to help her out in politics! Let me tell you this, you are only a prodigy by birth.

Because of the king's lineage." (Joshua)

"Shut up!!" (Bredda)

"For example, the three of Kuzunoha Company, no matter which one of those three brother fights, you wouldn't be able to defeat any. But if you move as the king of Limia, brother will have plenty enough power to become the strength of Hibiki." (Joshua)

"I'm telling you to shut up!!" (Bredda)

"This is father's will!" (Joshua)

"?!!"

"...It's not that I think this way. If the capital gets attacked again, is there an assurance that the king will be safe? If he were to fall in this state where we still haven't announced the next successor... We can't have the current Limia fight over who will be the next successor. Something like that, even brother understands, right? Father is thinking about announcing brother as the next successor. Things like reading the heart of your own father, you should at least be able to do that without having me telling you, brother!" (Joshua)

"I can still do it. I will become stronger and support Hibiki." (Bredda)

"I know that brother is someone that doesn't slack in his efforts, but not only Hibiki; the priestess, Wudi, and also Naval; everyone possesses outstanding talent. It isn't something that one can keep up with just hard work. Fortunately, brother's defensive sword style can become a help in moments of need. Please take heed of my words." (Joshua)

"Then what will they do about my substitute?! Yeah, it is certainly true that my strength is lacking, but is there any other person that's able to support the current Hibiki at her side? Before talking about being me being the king, shouldn't you first find that person?" (Bredda)

"...There is." (Joshua)

"What?" (Bredda)

"I said there is one. We will be meeting that person after the Kuzunoha

Company leaves though.” (Joshua)

Heartless words came from Joshua.

Bredda was at a loss for words, and was dumbfounded by the unyielding attitude of his little brother he had never seen before.



Night

Finishing my plans of the day, I had returned to my room and was passing a leisure time with Lime.

He was doing maintenance to his katana that had finished recovering, in a good mood while talking about the state of the land near the castle.

“As expected, they are still far from being finished in the reconstruction.” (Makoto)

“Right. There’s also the point that Rotsgard is just way too fast though. Mio-neesan showed several things, so there’s probably going to be a request for help from the prince or maybe someone else.” (Lime)

“If it’s about helping with the reconstruction, I don’t mind helping in a permissible level though. It would definitely be a lot easier for the people that come from Rotsgard if the groundwork has been done after all.” (Makoto)

“It would be great if that much is enough though.” (Lime)

“That’s the most we can do. No matter the case, if the war intensifies once more...” (Makoto)

“The demon race huh. I don’t think they will match the conveniency of hyumans and not attack in winter, but...I wonder what they are planning. If it were me, I would immediately come to crush the weakened Limia though.” (Lime)

For the demon race, winter is a season that’s easy for them to defend in. For hyumans, it is hard to attack.

But just as Lime says, it doesn’t mean the demons will have a hard time

attacking too.

This is something that I can say with confidence after meeting them; the Demon Lord is not the type that would loosen in the offensive.

He is a person that would attack with no hesitation.

In other words, there's a reason why he is not going for the attack.

In that case, this time where they are waiting for spring and the time they are doing their best in the reconstruction is actually a vital time for the humans.

Because it means that the demons are preparing a hand that is bigger than attacking the current Limia after all.

"Right. Well, when the time comes, I will move as well, so it won't turn into the worst scenario." (Makoto)

"Boss will move? You didn't seem to have much interest in the war though." (Lime)

"Hm? I don't have any interest in the war, I also have no intentions in participating. Just that, I don't think the demon race has much intentions of meddling with merchants and adventurers that much, so no matter what happens with the hegemony of society, I don't think much would change in our everyday life." (Makoto)

"...Getting along with the demon race is kind of a...complicated feeling. Then what do you mean by moving?" (Lime)

"Meaning that I will try to save Senpai at least. I don't know about this country though." (Makoto)

"...That's just like Boss-ssu. Hm? Someone's coming. This is...Hibiki-ssu ne. This late in the night, that's rare. (Lime)

"Senpai? If she has any business, it would be with me huh." (Makoto)

"Most likely. Well, even if Boss and Hibiki pass a night together, nothing will be happening, so it is most likely not going to end in seduction."
(Lime)

“Oh, sharp words there. Leaving aside me, from what I know, Senpai is quite popular you know?” (Makoto)

“...Well, she pretends as if she knows how to deal with men. She is the same as Boss, so she won't be able to do those kind of things.” (Lime)

“The same as me?” (Makoto)

“Hehe, just ignore this delirious talk of a man that has travelled along with her.” (Lime)

What is he talking about?

The points that Senpai and I have in common are pretty few, you know.

After a bit, knocking comes from the door.

“Yes?”

“It is Hibiki. Do you have a bit of time?” (Hibiki)

“Come in.” (Makoto)

Just like what Lime said, it was Senpai.

“...So Lime was here too. Can you please...no, Raidou-dono, can you accompany me for a bit? It might take a while though.” (Hibiki)

Is it something that she doesn't want to talk about in this room?

At the very least, it doesn't seem to be something related to the priestess-san.

I don't think we will be visiting her at this late of an hour after all.

“It is okay. Then Lime, I will be leaving for a bit. It is okay to go rest before me.” (Makoto)

“Okay. I will do that.” (Lime)

Lime lowers his head.

His mouth was smiling, but his eyes weren't smiling much.

Maybe because Tomoe or someone of that line has asked him to be cautious of her?

But even if he is going to eavesdrop, there's nothing that would trouble me if he heard, so I will just let him do whatever he wants.

"Then, let's go."

"Yes."

Senpai is trying to feign it as always, but I could tell from her body that she was tense.

Just like when we talked about the priestess, I don't think this will be a comfortable talk.

Because of the recall ritual, it has become a pretty good development for me in Limia though.

Waterfall seemed to be the sober type of dragon, but she opened the library and brought us back, so she is quite the open-hearted fellow.

I have also received the peddling permission for the Forest Oni's unit, and as long as we are able to return without anything happening, it would be great.

But it won't go so smoothly huh.

Ah, right.

It depends on the talk with Senpai, but maybe I should try talking with her about the recall ritual.

I think that information about returning home is important.

Yeah, that's not bad.

The back of Senpai made a silence flow through us, and that provided me time to arrange my thoughts.

In time, Senpai's legs stop and turns towards me.

Senpai and I were in a part of the castle, at a corridor where we could easily see all the land around the castle.

Chapter 211: Invitation and Response

“How’s Limia?”

“It is a big country. Isn’t it a major power that is fighting over the first and second place?” (Makoto)

A vague question from Senpai.

Leaving aside that I might have answered differently If she had made a more concrete question, I gave my impressions of Limia.

I have a few bad impressions of the rampant nobles, but...if I had to give a good part of it, it would be that, honestly, I don’t have much of an impression.

“Fufufu, a major power huh. That’s true. But you see, in truth, the major power that you and I imagine are quite different. It is also a half-hearted country.” (Hibiki)

“Half-hearted?” (Makoto)

I don’t think a major power can be half-hearted.

It is a major power because many people live there, right?

In that case, it wouldn’t be able to function as a country without a superior system supporting it.

“For example, the population, Makoto-kun, how much do you think is the population of Limia?” (Hibiki)

P-Population?

This is a topic I have not cared at all for since coming to this world.

“...The territory of Limia is wide, so maybe around the ten millions or hundred millions?” (Makoto)

Looking at its territory only, I don’t think it would be strange for them to have at least this much.

“The correct answer is: I don’t know.” (Hibiki)

“Hah?”

What's with that?

Isn't that cheating?

"In this world, there's practically no country –including Limia– that has a clear grasp of their population. From what I know, the only one that has a grasp on it is Tsige. Moreover, the ones in possession of the information were not government officials of the country, but a single company."
(Hibiki)

Seriously?

One company?

...I feel like there's only one who fits the bill.

I wonder if he has a grasp on the population even in the current sudden increases it is having, Rembrandt-san.

"It is most likely difficult...probably." (Makoto)

A grasp on the number of people...inhabitant's ballot, no, a census huh.

Wait, it should have existed in Japan since quite a long time ago though...

In other words, it shouldn't be difficult?

Unless it is quite the chaotic era.

This world is currently in war, but thinking about the time in which it began in my previous world, it wouldn't be strange for them to be able to do it.

If we are talking about a chaos that made the document burn in fire and had the minds of people agitated to the point of being unable to keep things like that in mind, it would be...the revolution at the Ounin era<1465–1467>, maybe?

In the past, even when I investigated in my free time about that era, I couldn't understand it well.

The enemies became allies, and even when the Heads of both powers were affiliated to the same camp, the battle continued, and by the time I

noticed, it was already the Sengoku period.

I don't think this world is in the same state.

"They don't have the will to do so, they don't find any reason to do it; it is just because of that. They just report about an approximate of the harvest, and from that report, they decide the tax. With a system like that, there's little point in keeping the population number in check." (Hibiki)

"I-I see." (Makoto)

They decide the tax by the land huh.

It is certainly true that by doing that, they are able to leave the rest to the nobles.

I feel like they are just pushing all the responsibility away though, but if the income is properly coming in, it doesn't seem to be a problem.

"But if a country is thinking about obtaining power, it is a topic that can't be ignored. And in truth, I would say that Limia's population is around 50 million to 70 million, but the tax yields are only around half of that number. So it is like they can avoid tax as much as they want." (Hibiki)

"Half... The remaining would be embezzlement huh." (Makoto)

Limia is practically a despotism of nobles after all.

"Yeah. I am sorry about asking for a consent after the fact, but we are currently utilizing your help in order to improve this part." (Hibiki)

"Me?" (Makoto)

Did I do something?

"It was a real help. Thanks." (Hibiki)

"No well, I don't have much awareness of this, but if I was of help...that's great. Or more like, Senpai, you are even doing things like improvements?" (Makoto)

I feel like this has to do with the very foundations of the country.

"Improvement is a special skill from Japan after all. There's no way I

wouldn't use it just because I am in a parallel world, right? I brought out the topic of population as an example, but there's a lot of things that can be changed in this world for the better." (Hibiki)

Isn't that saying too much?

Improvement isn't something only Japan does, it is done in the whole planet Earth.

"Well it is not like it shouldn't be used but...it seems like you are putting a lot of zeal into this country." (Makoto)

"...This is the country I have been summoned in." (Hibiki)

"I know that." (Makoto)

"It is the country where I know the most people, and the country where the most people know of me. It is the country that has placed their expectations on me. Isn't it a matter of course that I think deeply of it?" (Hibiki)

"Sorry." (Makoto)

I felt like I was being criticized, so I ended up apologizing.

Well, I also think deeply of Asora, so it should be about the same.

If it's that, I feel like I can understand.

Different from Asora, Limia is connected by land with other countries and if there's enemies, they can get attacked though.

"...I want you to like this country as well. Is it...difficult to desire that?" (Hibiki)

...

The eyes of Senpai were dyed in seriousness.

"Makoto-kun, this world and the Goddess, it is certainly true that it is very different from the common sense of our original world. There's definitely things that you can't just accept and things that are unreasonable." (Hibiki)

" ... "

“I know that you don’t hold positive feelings towards the Goddess. At this occasion, I won’t tell you to throw those away. Just that, for the sake of finishing this long war... can’t you please lend us your strength? Of course, I won’t be telling you to learn of war either. It is fine to supply us with goods at a suitable price.” (Hibiki)

“...”

So she is telling me to supply the goods of Limia huh.

If it’s to lend strength to Senpai only, it would be a different case, but if I were to cooperate in supplying the goods in order to finish the war, it would mean that I have taken the side of humans.

Meaning that, even if it’s indirectly, I am participating in the war.

Yeah, can’t do.

There’s no choice but to refuse.

“...How about it?” (Hibiki)

“Sorry, I can’t. If it’s just selling things to Senpai personally, I wouldn’t mind though.” (Makoto)

“I see. So you won’t be cooperating ‘for the sake of putting an end to the war’ huh.” (Hibiki)

...Ah.

Even I could tell that Senpai emphasized the words at the latter half.

So they are already suspecting that I have a connection with the demon race huh.

They don’t have any positive proof of it, so they can’t ask about this crime though.

“I’m thinking on opening the doors of Kuzunoha Company to all that need it. Please let me cooperate in the sense of neutrality.” (Makoto)

“You see, Makoto-kun...I don’t think that all the actions of the Goddess are correct.” (Hibiki)

“?!!”

Senpai?!

No wait, isn't that something a hero shouldn't say?!

"She is not the 'God' that we think of. She has a personality, and individuality. I have not heard of the existence of other Gods in this world aside from her, so it shouldn't be wrong to say that she is the only God though." (Hibiki)

"..."

That's right. There's no way I would accept something like that as a God. The God that Senpai is talking about is probably the almighty one. That kind of God, I have not met one either.

But...I do think that there's no way it is okay to leave that Goddess do as she pleases.

"The existence that manages and watches over this world. The Gods that exist are probably people that do these kind of jobs. Honestly, even now, I still think that she is a woman with problems in her personality." (Hibiki)

"Senpai..." (Makoto)

"But Makoto-kun, no matter the existence she is, she lives in a different place from us, in other words, an existence that has nothing to do with us, you know? Even for us, the day we met that night was the last. Until then, I didn't believe in the existence of God. In other words, isn't she only an existence that we met in a mere instant of our short lives?" (Hibiki)

"..."

"What will you do by maintaining that feeling of defeat inside of you? It is like having complains about the laws and phenomenons that naturally exist in the world. Isn't it pointless?" (Hibiki)

"Why did Senpai...?" (Makoto)

"Eh?" (Hibiki)

"Why did Senpai come to this world? Even though you had a life of success secured over there." (Makoto)

I don't understand at all.

"You want to know the reason why I came to this world?" (Hibiki)

"Yeah." (Makoto)

"You are interested in the reason of why someone like me, who shouldn't have any relation to this world to begin with, would come to this world?" (Hibiki)

"I"

Does Senpai know?

The fact that the two being summoned was the fault of me and my parents.

"...Because I thought it was interesting." (Hibiki)

"That's the main reason?" (Makoto)

"Well, it is not like I don't hold any feelings of wanting to return to my life in Japan. However, at that time, at that instant, I certainly did feel that being in a parallel world was appealing. That's why I am here. In the end, the whole reason I am here is because of the feelings of that instant. From then, I created connections in this world more and more, and I can no longer separate from it so easily." (Hibiki)

"Feelings of that instant." (Makoto)

So Senpai currently doesn't have intentions of going back then.

I can sense that from her.

Even though she said she wanted to return a bit, I couldn't feel a single trace of homesickness from Senpai's words.

"The Empire's Tomoki must be the same. Well, if the Goddess had asked him the previous day or the day after, his answer might have differed. There's plenty possibility that different heroes would be summoned, and he and I would currently be living a peaceful life in Japan." (Hibiki)

"..."

Right.

At that day, in just that instant, the two decided to become heroes.

A decision is a decision.

But if we were to call it a thoroughly thought decision, as expected, that wouldn't be the case.

"It is not like I am blaming Makoto-kun. Don't make that face. Let me advance the topic. In this world, the interference of God is not something definite or anything like that. This world will most likely change more and more. If we can finish the war soon and calm down the quarrel between humans and demons, we would be able to use that much time in changing the world." (Hibiki)

"Change...the world?" (Makoto)

"That's right. It can't be done easily, but I think it is possible to create a society where humans and demi-humans don't discriminate each other." (Hibiki)

Reforming the very thinking of humans then?

But as long as the foundation of that thinking lies in the teachings of the goddess, I think it is impossible.

Even in the teachings of the Spirits, they are told that demi-humans are existences below humans, you know?

"Even if you are a hero, isn't that way too idealistic? This is a world where a big number of humans follow a religion that goes against that very ideal of yours." (Makoto)

"Isn't Makoto-kun showing that possibility yourself? In Rotsgard and Tsige. It is possible to wake up the human society as a whole with those actions, right? I don't think the Goddess would be able to forcefully amend the people that want to change themselves. I have investigated decades of activities from her, but she herself is docile and simply has a deep affection for beautiful humans, and she doesn't punish humans that hold a different way of thinking from what she wills. At least in public it is known in that way." (Hibiki)

So Senpai is trying to change the Goddess' world from the inside?

But if that's the case, her thinking should be close to mine, and yet, why is it that I feel like Senpai is so far away?

"In that case, Senpai, even if the Goddess doesn't exist anymore in this world, for example; even if a different God were to take her place, you wouldn't mind, right?" (Makoto)

Well, even if I say a different God, I don't have a specific God in mind though.

I am just saying and see how she reacts.

But if Senpai does think that way, I thought that maybe it would be possible to form a cooperative relationship with her.

If she thinks that a society where demi-humans don't face discrimination is better, it would be possible to speak with the demons as well.

"...Even if the Goddess is gone?" (Hibiki)

"F-Figuratively speaking." (Makoto)

In the case that I actually fight her, win, and punish her, I don't know if the Goddess will continue managing this world as always.

In that case, I thought that since a God is gone, there would be a different God coming to fill her place.

"If it doesn't have any effect on the world at all, I wouldn't mind. Just that..." (Hibiki)

"Just that...?" (Makoto)

"If the Goddess is gone, the Spirits that work as her servants will be gone, and then she –the manager of this world– would be gone. Who knows what kind of effect would bring to the magic power that serves as the nucleus of this world. On top of that, the blessings and divine protection will disappear and the status of the Church will fall. There's also the fear that the very teachings of the Goddess will be thrown away as well." (Hibiki)

“ ... ”

I didn't think that far ahead.

Because I didn't care at all about what would happen to this world after the Goddess lost her power or at worst, died.

It is fine to just bring the people that want refuge into Asora first, and in the first place, it is a world that existed even when the Goddess wasn't there.

It seems like people like Root were there at that time, so I think that it won't go to the point of being impossible to live in.

That's why I didn't think further than that.

But it seems like Senpai had thought about the things that would happen if the Goddess were to fall.

“Even if, for argument's sake, it turns peaceful at that time, the world will instantly fall into great chaos, and there's an incredibly high chance that hell will break loose. Especially the humans that had received the affection of the Goddess, there's the chance that the other races will view them as enemies.” (Hibiki)

“It is certainly true that there's the chance.” (Makoto)

Or more like, it will definitely turn out that way.

The blessing will be gone, so leaving aside the people that have true strength, most of the humans will be facing a hard time.

Also, if the common language disappears, it might turn into a mess, like the Tower of Babel.

They wouldn't be able to create a big country like now, so the hegemony of the world will probably be changed to another race.

“If you are saying you have a method that will not show a single effect like that to the world, I don't mind.” (Hibiki)

“Then if there's an effect like what Senpai has stated?” (Makoto)

“Even if it costs me my life, I will go against it.” (Hibiki)

“...Even if it costs you your life?” (Makoto)

“If there’s someone planning something like that, it would be the same as the demon race; a world-class terrorist. Ruthlessly cornering the people that are living in peace and taking away their lives. It is enough to call it pure evil. The ones facing the most damage would be the humans, but the demi-humans will also be involved with no exception.” (Hibiki)

“Terrorist. The demons are a different race, they possess a country, and are opponents that you are fighting in war. Even though you are doing war with them, you call them in that way. Aren’t you a bit too prejudiced?” (Makoto)

Terrorist is a word I didn’t expect.

To call the war with the demons terrorism...

“Yeah. It is like a war brought by the minority that knew that no matter what they tried, they wouldn’t be able to reign supreme against the majority. That’s probably why the Goddess got impatient and called the heroes.” (Hibiki)

“The demon race is the minority?” (Makoto)

I imagine the conflicts and invasions of places like Russia and China.

I remember the words of Zef.

If I remember correctly, he said that the demon race population is at most 1 million or 1.5 million.

If Limia has several millions just like Senpai said, the human population is most likely more than 4 times that.

They are called the four major powers, so I was expecting that though.

So if it’s 50 million, then 200 million?

Two hundred million against a few millions.

If the other demi-humans are added to the equation, would it turn into the ten millions?

The demon race units are originally composed by mixed races.

No, even with that, it would still be an incredibly low number compared to humans.

Whichever the case, this is not on the level of war.

Just like Senpai said, this is on the level of a small insurrection.

Even if we take into account that this world counts more the quality than the quantity, it is honestly incredible that the demon race is putting up a good fight.

“If the demon race request of it, it would bring the denial of the Goddess and her retribution...Well, it wouldn’t go so far, but they should at least be able to seek a better treatment. What they are doing is denying the very social system of this world they have been living in.” (Hibiki)

“They could have gone into extinction if they hadn’t done that.”
(Makoto)

“You really take the side of demons here.” (Hibiki)

“I have seen something that made me realize just how severe the Goddess’ discrimination was, after all. Then, the actions of the demon race were brought by the need of surviving.” (Makoto)

“Yeah, their raising of an army in this occasion was probably something unavoidable.” (Hibiki)

“Then—!” (Makoto)

“That means it is already too late. They had to do something before it turned out that way. To better that scorned environment they had even if for a bit, they should have tried to make the humans accept them. With a method aside from taking arms, that is.” (Hibiki)

No way, that’s asking for too much.

Regarding the demon race, it was practically as if the Goddess made the first move telling them to go away and cornered them.

“Isn’t that just asking for too much?” (Makoto)

“I have taken a look at the history of demons and humans. Of course,

this was from the historical records of humans, so there's most likely bias there though. Just that, there haven't been much events where the demons have acted in a positive way towards humans. And within those small number of people, there's not a single one that has continued for long." (Hibiki)

"History. The history between humans and demons." (Makoto)

I only know rough details of it.

"For the demons, humans are an overwhelming majority, moreover, it is collected in a single religion, it is also an opponent that has better individual battle power, you know? From the beginning, the choice of fighting was not something sane." (Hibiki)

"...Right." (Makoto)

Because of the blessing of the Goddess, the demon race was also being overpowered by humans in the magic power side as well, so there was no good part in it.

The more I think about it, the more impressed I am by the demons being able to put up a good fight against the humans.

Well, it is not like they have been doing war forever. They were mostly enduring the discrimination and oppression.

"But the demons fought with the humans several times, lost, and still, they haven't changed their way of dealing with things." (Hibiki)

"..."

"They should have had several opportunities to. The chance to enter within humans just like the demi-humans." (Hibiki)

"Eh?" (Makoto)

"If it were me, that's what I would do. If it's a big opponent and I am unable to do anything about it with our power, I would join them and change them from the inside. I would create an opportunity to enter, and then, manage something from there. Isn't that one of the few choices that the minority has in order to survive?" (Hibiki)

“Are you saying that they should live amidst humans as slaves?”
(Makoto)

“...Even if it's a starting line from a slave position, it is possible to crawl their way up. But they took arms to the very end. I don't have the intention of wiping them all out, but if we don't corner them to that very limit to show an example, no one would be able to accept it. At the very least, we would have to eliminate the people that are managing their country, their army, and the ones cooperating with them; every one of them.” (Hibiki)

“Accept it, you say. Isn't that also because of the warped teachings of the Goddess?” (Makoto)

If only she hadn't tainted this world with her stupid teachings, this wouldn't have turned out this way.

The existence of that Goddess is the main reason for this problem, so they probably have to confront her at some point in time.

In that case, even if it will somewhat trouble the people that are currently living, isn't it a lot better to just eliminate that Goddess that has spread this strange way of thinking?

“The warped teachings of the Goddess huh. But that is the religion that all the world follows, you know. Isn't that the same as having an overwhelming minority taking arms?” (Hibiki)

“Then you are saying that they should resign to their fate? That the teachings of the Goddess can't be helped, and it also can't be helped that the demon race is rendered impossible to stand back up? That because they didn't conform with those conditions quickly and become slaves for the sake of surviving, it can't be helped that they are receiving a worse treatment than that? Is that what you think, Senpai?” (Makoto)

I am kind of pissed here.

No matter who, if they are being oppressed, they would want to make a complain or two.

To expect those kind of people to calmly look at the situation, think of the future, and find a good way for the race to survive, something like

that...who would be able to blame them for being unable to do that?

To be able to act composedly no matter when, that's not something that anyone could do.

Thinking that way, I unconsciously spoke to Senpai in a harsh tone.

"That's right." (Hibiki)

"!!"

It is not like I thought Senpai would make a troubled expression...but I thought she would at least show hesitation.

The instant answer of Senpai blocked my words.

"I said this just a few moments ago but, the demon race and the humans are already in a situation where it is already too late. Without a closure for this war, neither of the races will be able to advance. That's how much hatred is gathered between both sides. Of course, I who has been fighting alongside Limia, am no exception. The Goddess' teachings, their dependence to her, the discrimination towards demi-humans; all these problems are problems that can only be dealt with after this war is over. This one point is impossible to move or change anymore. No one is able to." (Hibiki)

"No one..." (Makoto)

Is that true?

If it is the Kuzunoha Company that has a connection with both, wouldn't it be able to work out somehow?

...No.

Before that, wouldn't things change a lot if I just had that Bug reflect?

"No one. Even for Makoto, that's impossible. The humans that had their family taken away by demons had their hatred grow inside of themselves, and that hatred becomes the fangs that point towards them. It is the same for the demons that had their family taken away by humans. This chain of losses....can't be erased." (Hibiki)

Senpai made a pained expression for an instant.

The current Senpai is as cold as ice, and she is speaking with an indifferent expression, so that one instant remained in my mind.

Memories can't be erased huh.

Rotsgard has become a lot easier to live in, but it is certainly true that it would be hard to erase that memory.

The more there are, the higher the amount of deaths there will be after all.

“Hatred and sadness. It is not something that easily disappears. I...can understand that.” (Makoto)

As I thought, I should do something quick about that Goddess.

Senpai seems to be worried about the later, but in the end, if the Goddess remains, the current state of things won't change.

I will have to revise my attitude towards Bug.

“The demons who are the minority, are going against the overwhelming majority which are the humans, and the Goddess. This revolution that terrorists have raised which the majority of the people in this world didn't wish for, this madness of a war, I will end it as soon as possible. Makoto-kun, I will say it again. Lend us your power, please.” (Hibiki)

Senpai lowers her head deeply.

But my thoughts won't change.

Actually, I think that Senpai is over-thinking this in a way too realistic of a manner.

In this world that the Goddess does whatever she wants, I don't feel like they would be able to change their sense of worth even if they took their time trying.

“...Senpai, I will say it again as well. I refuse.” (Makoto)

“Let me say this frankly, the stance that you Kuzunoha Company are taking can bring advantage to the demon race. The act of providing goods

to both sides in a war, is an act of a merchant asking for a death sentence, you know? Is the Kusunoha Company wishing for war and looking to gain profit from it?" (Hibiki)

"No. I also think that it would be better if the war didn't exist. Just that, I think that the whole reason for this is that Goddess, and if only we could make her change her way of thinking, there would be as many methods born from it." (Makoto)

"What do you mean? Even if the Goddess is the cause, what does Makoto-kun plan on doing?" (Hibiki)

"It is not wrong that the policy of the Kusunoha Company is to welcome anyone that needs it, but...I personally think it would be better to drag down that Goddess once." (Makoto)

"Drag down the Goddess..." (Hibiki)

Senpai makes a short mutter and turned speechless.

"It is certainly true that the world will fall into a temporal chaos, and it might put a limit to the magic that magicians can use. It might turn into an End of the Century situation between humans and demi-humans, but even with that, I think that the best plan is to kick that woman out from the God position she has been lying on." (Makoto)

"...How?" (Hibiki)

"Well, by force." (Makoto)

"By force, you say. The opponent is a God you know? Even if, for argument's sake, you were to overpower her, would you be able to substitute for her?!" (Hibiki)

"Overpower? I don't know about that, but I don't intend to become the replacement of her." (Makoto)

"Then you will simply eliminate a God?" (Hibiki)

Senpai held her head and shook it aimlessly.

No no no, I don't plan on eliminating her.

I was thinking that it would be fine to just leave her a bit further from half-dead.

I am still alive after all, and the reason why I met with Tomoe and the others was in part because of that Bug.

“No well, she is not the only God out there, so as we do our stuff, a substitute will come, probably.” (Makoto)

“...You speak as if you have met other Gods. Well, I have been brought to a strange place with a shady individual though.” (Hibiki)

“How to say it, I have met with a God-sama that seems to be an acquaintance of that Goddess.” (Makoto)

“...That’s why you are saying that you will be changing that Goddess’ way of thinking by force? Without thinking at all about the repercussions that it can cause.” (Hibiki)

“If something happens, we can just take refuge until things settle down.” (Makoto)

“You are really indifferent at the crisis of hyumans. You don’t discriminate demi-humans, but you discriminate hyumans huh.” (Hibiki)

?!!

No no!

I am not discriminating hyumans.

“I am not discriminating demi-humans or hyumans.” (Makoto)

“...You are seriously saying that. Then this is serious.” (Hibiki)

“What do you mean?” (Makoto)

“From Makoto-kun’s speech and conduct, you are flickering your thoughts that it can’t be helped since the hyumans have done whatever they wanted along with the Goddess.” (Hibiki)

“Well, it is true that the hyumans have done whatever they wanted for so long, right?” (Makoto)

That’s not discrimination, it is the truth.

“Yeah, but to give a cold reception because of that, isn’t that considered discrimination?” (Hibiki)

“Hyumans are the strong ones that overwhelm this world with their numbers. Why would the word discrimination apply for them?” (Makoto)

Isn’t discrimination something done by society’s strong ones over the weak ones?

“And so what?” (Hibiki)

“Eh?”

“Are you saying that even if someone were to discriminate rulers, it wouldn’t be considered discrimination? The gazes that the hyumans direct towards demi-humans is peculiar, but have you noticed? Makoto-kun, at times, you have directed those kind of gazes towards hyumans. Even here, and at Rotsgard as well.” (Hibiki)

“Ugh...” (Makoto)

If she brings out gazes, I can’t say I am conscious of it.

But if I am asked if it is okay to show discriminating actions towards the strong, I would say it is not.

“Hey Makoto-kun, in the structure of this world, you and I are considered outsiders, right? In that case, not taking into account the past history and coming in contact with the hyumans and demi-humans in equal grounds, isn’t that how a person that doesn’t discriminate would act? If there’s a person that’s troubled in front of you, shouldn’t you be stretching out your hand no matter the way that person has been living until now and their social standing? For hyumans, they have done whatever they have wanted, so they should suck it up; for demi-humans, they are pitiful, so help them. Isn’t that what you would call discrimination towards hyumans?” (Hibiki)

“But the hyumans have been utilizing the demi-humans as their servants, and they have been living shouldering this. In the first place, there’s no way I would be able to look at them with eyes like those of a Saint.” (Makoto)

“That’s why. You end up thinking that way because you are thinking with our common sense. This is not Japan, this is a parallel world. In the common sense of this world, humans and demi-humans are this way. In the first place, the demon race has picked a fight against that common sense and have brought about a war, you know?” (Hibiki)

“...That’s a mistaken common sense.” (Makoto)

“As a Japanese, that is. Your basis for your cold reception towards humans is something that’s natural common sense, and most people would not understand being criticized for it. Even in humans, when in situations between other humans, where you take out the attitude towards demi-humans and their attachment to beauty, they are people that properly hate discrimination.” (Hibiki)

“Even if you take out things that shouldn’t be taken out, it won’t make me accept it.” (Makoto)

“To change their root cognition, there’s the need for time, which would have to be after the war is over. But if there’s Makoto-kun who wants to do that by force against the Goddess, it would all end up crumbling.” (Hibiki)

“Not really. I might lose, and it is okay for Senpai to just continue doing war. I will be moving with my own thoughts. Even if it’s Senpai, I won’t be affirming everything you say and obeying it.” (Makoto)

“If you were to lose, that would be...” (Hibiki)

Senpai places both arms on the handrail and bends her body.

“...There’s plenty chance for it to happen. Even if she is like that, she is still a God after all.” (Makoto)

Words leaked out from Senpai who had her face hidden, a mutter of expectation for me to lose.

From the conversation until now, I could tell that it would be a pleasant development for her.

I am slightly shocked, but it can’t be helped.

Senpai seems to be entirely against the idea of me fighting the Goddess after all.

Even so, I am practically not thinking about the effects that will bring forth to the world like Senpai said.

I refuse managing a world like this, and I don't want to become a God either.

Instead of arranging such pointless things, it is much more important to find a method to return to my original world with Tomoe and the others while being able to go back and forth to Asora.

"I can't imagine you losing." (Hibiki)

As if resenting me, Senpai turned a sulking face towards me.

"W-Well, thanks." (Makoto)

"Things like being too far away, the scale being too much, or the numbers being way too many; I know that I can't do anything about those, but this is the first time I have felt that no matter what I do, I won't be able to surpass an individual. Even if I went at full power in my current self." (Hibiki)

The full power of the current Senpai huh.

As I thought, maybe she has obtained some power like that of Sakai.

Even if that's not the case, there's definitely something.

"No well, Senpai was also strong, you know. It was like 'as expected of a hero'." (Makoto)

"Even though you were not serious at all. Heh~, then, between me and the Demon Lord, who is stronger?" (Hibiki)

"...If I were to fight the Demon Lord, I would be able to answer you." (Makoto)

"Then, what about Io, White One?" (Hibiki)

"...With that strong attack power, maybe you can win against Io?" (Makoto)

To fight with that person, it would depend on how well you can surpass that regeneration power of his after all.

But if you were to try and go until he is unable to regenerate, it would turn into an incredible endurance battle.

I think there would be the need to finish the fight in one go.

Senpai has faced painful experiences with him, right?

If I remember correctly, she has close to a terrible affinity against him.

But if it's the current Senpai, she might be able to defeat him.

Thinking about it that way, she is a dangerous one.

Because that means she is stronger than that scary-looking giant.

“Receiving the input of the White One, I feel my confidence strengthening. That guy...is someone I have to win against no matter what, after all.” (Hibiki)

“I see.” (Makoto)

After meeting several times in the battlefield, something like destiny is born, maybe.

I don't have much of those.

Aside from that Goddess.

“Hm.”

Senpai releases the handrail, and stretches her body upright.

Maybe because of her experience in kendo, Senpai's posture is good.

“So that means Kusunoha Company and Raidou are the allies of everyone in trouble, right? Okay, I got it.” (Hibiki)

“Hah?” (Makoto)

I-Is that okay?

That helps me out though.

No matter how much she asks me to cooperate with Limia, I won't be

nodding after all.

“On top of that, I have learned that you are a troublesome person that is fully antagonistic towards the Goddess. Well, about that, I will keep it a secret for you though.” (Hibiki)

“...Thanks.” (Makoto)

“The Goddess probably hasn’t heard of it either after all. With the capital having been raided, leaving aside the blessing and divine protection, there has been practically no reaction from her. What she is thinking is a mystery.” (Hibiki)

No reaction?

In other words, she hasn’t answered the calls of the Church or the heroes?

The attack to the capital...I see, it is around the time when that Goddess met with those Gods.

Did they make some sort of agreement that’s making her unable to move?

I have not been told the details of it, so...

“We have done a strange talk as well, but yeah. Tentatively speaking, I would like to eliminate the influence and distortion of the Goddess, and having you know that is plenty enough for today.” (Hibiki)

“It sounds like you feel it will be in a pretty far future though.” (Makoto)

A long time after we die, that is.

Maybe that’s why I felt Senpai so distant.

The objectives that Senpai shoulders are not things that she always tries to resolve herself.

She resolves them bit by bit, and if it isn’t possible with her, she places that job to the future generation.

“We are a race that can transfer their feelings, you know. By doing that, we are able to turn time into our allies as well. Trying to do everything by

yourself in your own era can bring about pointless pain and can distort your objective.” (Hibiki)

“What you have decided to do yourself should be accomplished by oneself. I think that’s something splendid. Time can fade memories, and there’s no assurance that the next generation will hold the same feelings as you after all.” (Makoto)

“So you won’t think about moving as a whole...you won’t believe in this world’s society as you act huh.” (Hibiki)

“Just like how Senpai taught me, in my foundation, there’s most likely some discriminating feelings towards humans. I think that’s what it means to understand the words, but being unable to accept it. Even if Senpai tells me to believe in their change, I just can’t. Sorry.” (Makoto)

“...It isn’t something that can be immediately eliminated right after understanding it. It isn’t something you need to apologize for either. From now on, I will be counting on you as a customer of yours, Makoto-kun.” (Hibiki)

“Yes...here as well.” (Makoto)

We look close, but Senpai and I are distant.

I didn’t want to know of it, but I ended up knowing it.

This is different from the disgust I felt towards Tomoki, like a disparity of not wanting something like this to happen.

Senpai accepts the current world of that Goddess.

On top of that, she is trying to tell the world about this sense of discomfort and trying to change it slowly.

She is aware that it will take an enormous amount of time.

Without caring about those kind of things, I am thinking that it is natural for me to want to have the Goddess reflect as soon as possible and have the humans and demi-humans enter an equal relationship.

Without caring about how much or how many consequences it might bring.

From this world and this Goddess' perspective...I probably do look like a fiendish terrorist...

Even so, if I can simply find a method to return to my world in a desirable way, I think I would act.

For the sake of fighting once with the Goddess.

I wonder, if that time comes, will I end up fighting Senpai?

I don't think a fight against that person and me will come to a conclusion, but if possible, I would want to avoid having Senpai point a sword at me.

Chapter 212: Drowsiness of the Victor

“I understand... Makoto-kun pushed away my serious emotions of the several millions of lives that I have been entrusted with. From what I was shown, I felt like he was a lot more scary than that Goddess.” (Hibiki)
After Makoto left from the passage, Hibiki was left alone.

A self-depreciating mutter came from her mouth.

“I am seriously the type that stumbles when it counts the most.” (Hibiki)
The fight with Io.

Remembering the invitations she did to Mio and Lime, Hibiki makes a wry smile.

She felt as if the important things were slipping from her hands, an irritating feeling.

The wind passes in between the fingers of her opened hand.

She felt as if it was a feeling similar to this.

Her self-depreciation continued.

“If we lose to the demon race, that’s the end; if we lose in the war against Tomoki, it will be the end as well; and if Makoto-kun goes haywire, it will be the end too huh. What an incredible situation. The last one has a narrow chance of hope though. A world without the Goddess huh... Thinking about the current state, it will most definitely become a warring era with the flood of the small countries, so it wouldn’t change the fact that it will be despairing.” (Hibiki) A disastrous image appears in the mind of Hibiki, and disappears.

Winning against the demon race, shutting the Empire, and on top of that, restrain Makoto with something aside from power.

After doing all that would Hibiki finally be able to begin with her objective.

Just like what she said about it being an incredible situation, it is practically close to impossible.

Even so, Hibiki can't just withdraw.

"Even so, I have to do my best till the end. Believing in me, many have died. For the sake of my objective, I have killed many. There's also people like Naval that have sacrificed themselves. I can't give up. I have to struggle." (Hibiki) As an awakened one from the world transfers, she has obtained the ability to change the conception of others into power.

Because of that point as well, she is aware of the innumerable cord-like feelings that have been placed on her.

The lives that have been entrusted to her, and the lives she has taken away; while having those in mind, Hibiki fights.

Hibiki felt that she has the obligation to do her best until the last moment of her life.

That's why she can't just push them aside.

Even if the other party is someone with power that can easily cut apart those feelings.

"Seriously...being a hero is quite the worthwhile position." (Hibiki) For Hibiki, the Goddess is the person that has provided her with this environment.

That's why Hibiki feels a set amount of gratitude towards her.

But that's all there's to it.

Hibiki's impression of her was like that of the first person that had found her.

Sadly to say, she is a type that is hard to respect as a superior, and there's several problems with her as well.

But as a numerical value, she provides benefits, so it is someone that can't be cut off and there's no choice but to just accept it.

It is something like that.

Thinking until there, Hibiki sighs.

"Hah...If I could change the religion I am shouldering, I think it would be

easier to have Makoto-kun instead of the Goddess. Even if he were to be treated as a God, by using the front of worshipping, it can be hidden in many ways. But even when he said such outrageous things, the only strong reactions I got from him were with the Goddess, and...his discrimination towards humans. He doesn't have a purpose. That boy doesn't even have the intention of founding a nation. If he at least had something like that..." (Hibiki) Hibiki could tell that the options for the future would increase a lot.

If Makoto were to become a king, if he were to announce that he would be founding a nation, the humans and demons wouldn't be able to ignore it.

Because it would be a big problem that would force them to even stagnate this hatred-filled war in order to deal with it.

Anyone that has seen his power would be able to tell.

Because it would mean that a country that surpasses all the currently existing countries in military power will be born all of a sudden.

At the very least, in the time that Makoto and his close aides are alive, they wouldn't be able to enter a full-out war without that country, is what Hibiki thought.

"He doesn't have the intentions to become a king or a God either. Because of that, his inability for authority is unconsciously showing, and thinks that the Goddess is an enemy of equal ground. I seriously don't understand him..." (Hibiki) Hibiki's waist falls to the ground.

Hibiki sits in the cold corridor.

"My legs gave out...but that's a given, right? If I made a mistake, I might have ended up dead cold right now at this place. Not only my spirit, even my body was enduring the fear huh." (Hibiki) An absolute strength.

Currently for Hibiki, that's exactly what Misumi Makoto is.

The moment those straining feelings loosened, Hibiki's body reminded her that.

What she wanted to ask, her invitation, and also, the confrontation she feared.

For Hibiki, the conversation just now was something she challenged with the feelings of standing on thin ice.

(He is already not in a dimension where I can think of him in human standards. Earthquake, tsunami, eruption, tornado...he is close to those. Fighting against him is not that realistic, but...as long as it is someone that moves with a will, I can't ignore it. Seriously, he has become quite the monster.) (Hibiki) Hibiki then notices.

That within herself, two things began to bother her.

The first one is something that she had already expected.

They were her own emotions after all.

(Then why I don't obey him? If it's just in military power, he surpasses that of a country; a monster in the skin of a human. No matter what Limia tries to do, they probably wouldn't be able to beat him. Then there should be no other choice but to curry his favor, and yet...) (Hibiki) The lights of the land near the castle she was looking at were few, and as she saw them grow sparse, Hibiki sunk into silence.

(...I see. It is hatred. I can't forgive the demon race. They have burned many villages, killed many humans, and also my comrade...Naval as well. Ah, maybe that's why.) (Hibiki) Hibiki nodded a few times.

Facing your own emotions and controlling them.

It is something important, but difficult to do.

When those emotions turn so natural that they seep deep into yourself, it becomes even harder to do.

Overcoming the death of a comrade is also a different matter.

Hibiki finally understood why she didn't choose to completely curry favor on Makoto.

(Of course, I have killed many of them as well. Within them, there should have been people with comrades, family, and lovers. Even so, I hate

the demon race. I see...so this is how it feels to be a concerned party. Is the hatred of war something so troublesome?) (Hibiki) Hibiki was surprised that within her deepest self, hatred towards the demon race had piled up.

It is true that the demon race is the enemy, and there's no doubt that they are a hateful enemy, but she didn't know that it was binding her this much.

Since she thought she had it somewhat under control, this was shocking.

(To curry the favor of Makoto-kun, I would have to affirm his ideals even if it is only on the outside. In other words, it would become hard to continue the war. That's why I...) (Hibiki) In other words, she wished for the continuation of the war.

With her hand covering her mouth, Hibiki's pair of eyes opened wide.

(That's why I can't. I want to bring down my enemy. That's right. Until I kill Io, I...) (Hibiki) Thinking about the reason why she wanted the war to continue, she reached an answer.

In the end, it was an incredibly personal reason, and Hibiki was amazed of herself.

Even though it was not funny at all, she felt a laugh coming out from within her throat.

After a while, the laughing stopped, but Hibiki didn't stand up and was sitting just like that.

She was thinking about the other thing that was bothering her.

(I...what did I feel a sense of discomfort in? The moment I thought of Makoto-kun as a monster, I certainly felt it... Right, 'refuge'! He said that when the world goes into chaos and turns into an End of the Century era, they could just go take refuge for a while. Why is there a need to take refuge? There's no doubt that the world will fall into great chaos if the Goddess is defeated. But it is not a situation where individuals with power or organizations would take refuge. If it's the Kusunoha Company, it is realistically possible to even be able to become the number one company. But he said that he would be taking refuge.) (Hibiki) That word coming

from someone strong made Hibiki feel a sense of discomfort.

(Just that, when it comes from the mouth of Makoto, it doesn't feel that strange. Refuge huh. A safe place. In other words, he has a place where no matter if the world has fallen into chaos, he is able to secure safety. That wouldn't be his store. In the variant incident at Rotsgard, the Kusunoha Company's store was destroyed. Also, Rotsgard and Tsige won't be spared from the chaos.) (Hibiki) Hibiki lists out the places where Makoto has connections with.

Because she wanted to grasp even if a little bit more information of Makoto and his tendencies.

(! There is. The place that he arrived in when he came to this world. The border of the world. If he has a base in the deepest parts of that wasteland, it would signify that it is safe. They would be able to cut themselves away and live peacefully for years. For him who doesn't think about calming the chaos himself, it is plenty possible.) (Hibiki) She digs out the memory she had of Tsige where she went to train temporarily in.

She tries to remember as many stories of bases in the wasteland as possible.

And then, she arrives at one answer.

In the first place, those kind of talks are rare, and by elimination process, it was plenty possible to arrive at 'that' place.

"...The Mirage Town. I don't want to think it is possible, but could it be, that's the base of Makoto-kun -of the Kusunoha Company?" (Hibiki) A Mirage Town that a few number in Tsige have heard of.

In the end, Hibiki returned to Limia without going to that town.

But the more she thought about it, the closer she felt the relation between Kusunoha Company and that Mirage Town.

"A mirage town located somewhere in the wasteland. If that's his base, his first store being in Tsige begins to look like a splendid decoy. The wasteland is his base and has set up a store at Tsige. That's right, if he already had a base by the time he left the wasteland and entered Tsige..."

(Hibiki) Hibiki noticed one other scary thing.

Her words stop unconsciously.

(For a base, the wasteland is just far. WAY too far! A base needs to be in a place where one can return in a short amount of time. His Majesty and prince Joshua said this when they returned from Rotsgard, that they have broken the long distance teleportation that the Kuzunoha Company was relying on... That's a lie. It hasn't been broken. They don't use the merchant transportation method to 'return', they have in their hands a stable long-distance teleportation. Because they are able to take refuge after all.) (Hibiki) Hibiki doesn't know of Asora.

She does know that there's a mirage town somewhere in the vast border of the world.

It would be impossible for her to be able to predict a parallel space, so even if it's not a perfect correct answer, it was a guess that was close to what Makoto's base is.

(If he is able to do business in this world while ignoring distance completely, it would be logical how he is able to have a store and has allowance to do peddling around the whole world. Yeah. Kuzunoha Company is like the Goddess, if I were to consider them an existence living on a different plane altogether... They declared that they didn't have interest in the war, so there's many ways to deal with this.) (Hibiki) Hibiki thinks about how she will be interacting with the Kuzunoha Company.

At the same time, she was estimating the way to progress in the war with the demon race.

(It is slightly different from the request of Waterfall, but if I have Makoto-kun compromise that he won't be destroying the world, it is still salvageable. If we are able to bring the advantages of Kuzunoha Company and him to the humans...next, as long as the demon race does a big move in the time that the Goddess is still okay, there's the chance that it will turn advantageous for us. But well, the demon race is also hostile to the Goddess, so there's not much for me to worry about in this part huh.) Hibiki stands up.

She walks towards the opposite direction of the passage that Makoto walked away in.

Even when she knew Kuzunoha Company's power to a certain degree, her eyes didn't show the light of giving up, it reflected strength.

Makoto and Hibiki's conversation, and Hibiki's monologue. That one act had ended.

At one of the castle's spires pretty far away from the passage, one shadow was sitting there.

It is the roof portion of the spire that shouldn't have people to begin with.

The girl that was eavesdropping at the whole conversation of Makoto and Hibiki, first smiled with her mouth, and it spread all the way to her eyes.

"Ufufufu, a breakdown. That's a given-desu. Waka-sama and Hibiki's way of thinking about the current state was simply coincidentally similar after all. It has gone well."

Makoto's follower, Mio.

Mio had created a flow where it would lead to Makoto and Hibiki's conversation, and induced it.

But she didn't manipulate the result, and didn't interfere in it either.

Mio was able to read to a certain degree what was going to happen if they were to clash their opinions.

"When I heard Tomoe-san's assessment of Hibiki, it came to me. That it would be fine; that Waka-sama and her are not compatible. It is Hibiki who doesn't know of what's beneath, and Waka-sama who, in a sense, only looks from beneath. It was an obvious result-desu." (Mio) The assessment Mio heard from Tomoe.

It is something that even now Hibiki isn't aware of, a subconscious part.

From what Tomoe said: Hibiki doesn't know of the standing of the weak.

What Tomoe said of Hibiki was that: ‘She doesn’t understand the standing of the absolute weak. Because that girl believes that if they do their best, they will be able to bring about results-ja. No matter how they struggle it will be for naught, she doesn’t know that there are people that can only be weak. Well, she herself can do anything she tries to do, so since she is young, thinking that way can’t be helped~’.

And in truth, that’s what Hibiki thinks.

If you try till death, people will be able to bring about some results.

Of course, there’s many people in reality that can bring about ‘some’ results, but in society, there’s also a part that can’t do anything no matter what they try.

Not only the environment and the talent, there’s also cases where there’s external pressure they can’t go against.

But Hibiki, who clearly has not been a concerned party of these cases and even in Earth was born in a blessed household in Japan and with high talent, speaking about how much she understands of the current state, just like how Tomoe said, it is a part that can’t be helped.

On the other hand, Makoto doesn’t hold the point of view of a strong one.

Even in the parts of position and responsibility, he doesn’t understand in what stage he should be standing in.

Without any jokes and exaggeration, a responsibility that fits the strength of Makoto would be to act while thinking about the whole world in itself.

“It is because the more she learns, the more she doesn’t understand. That’s why, Hibiki is cautious towards Waka-sama. And so, because she is unable to bring him in, what they are trying to do is to exclude Waka-sama as much as possible from the war. But Waka-sama won’t consent.”
(Mio) Mio was laughing in a truly gleeful manner.

The figure of Mio laughing simple-mindedly below the moonlight felt like it had madness drifting about, and a dangerous beauty.

“That’s because Waka-sama doesn’t care if it’s hyuman of demi-human after all. He would help out the demi-humans that are troubled, but that’s all. What’s important for that personage is his own circle. And from the hyumans that I have seen, there was an abundance of idiots, so his preference turned into demi-humans, that’s all. It is so simple, and yet... everyone can’t understand it. That’s just strange-desu wa.” (Mio) Mio looks at the true character of Makoto in that way.

That’s correct.

That’s why Makoto is still involving himself with hyumans, and at the same time, he has turned into a point where he can’t hold a wider field of vision no matter how much time passes.

“It is impossible to not get involved in the war. If there’s people troubled coming from it, Waka-sama will act. There’s no way he would think about what would happen in the future or the troublesome things that might come. There’s no need to match the pace of Hibiki who only thinks about big things like the future, the world. In the first place, that’s all empty dreams. Waka-sama most likely noticed it with this. To begin with, future things should be thought by the people of the future-desu wa. No matter what Waka-sama who lives in the present does, no matter what happens to the world because of it, it is simply an unavoidable destiny for the people that will be born later.” (Mio) She once again voices out an unreasonable logic.

But Mio originally doesn’t care for anyone other than Makoto.

That’s why, for her. what makes Makoto happy is the correct thing to do.

If the noise is getting unbearable and her master is troubled, she wants to remove the seed of that distress.

The actions of Mio this time, were simply because of that.

Just that, Makoto takes in mind his surroundings way too much, to the point of overdoing it.

That’s why Mio moved slightly indirectly.

“The hyumans, the demons, and that one above, are really annoying.

Waka-sama is saying that he doesn't have any interest, so you should just go kill among yourselves as much as you want in a place that Waka-sama's eyes don't reach-desu. Seriously.” (Mio) Mio disappearing from the spire, and those words, were done at almost the same time.



“Eh? Isn't that Priestess-san -ah no, Priestess-sama?”

“...”

Before arriving at my room, I encountered an unexpected person.

One member of Senpai's party, the priestess of Lorel. If I remember correctly...her name was Chiya.

She looks like she is the same age as Rinon, so she is probably 12-13.

Even though it is already pretty late in the night, she was standing there as if lying in wait for me.

Her attire is also probably not the one she uses when going to sleep.

“Ehm...do you have business with me?” (Makoto)

She maintained her silence, but I ask her who has been staring at me all this time.

“I am the priestess of Lorel, my name is Chiya. First of all, I want to apologize for my impoliteness. I am very sorry.” (Chiya) She lowers her head deeply.

The 90° type, the one that bends the body a lot.

“You suddenly collapsed, so please don't mind it too much. I have heard a bit of the circumstances after all. Uhm, I would be happy if you were to tell me what you can about what you saw though.” (Makoto) “It is not only for the matter of me collapsing. In the time of the dinner, I was unable to take part in it, not even once.” (Chiya) “Your physical condition was not good, so it didn't affect my mood. It is something that can't be helped.” (Makoto) It is true that in the dinners, I was together with Senpai and prince Joshua a lot, but I haven't been together with the priestess once.

In one instance, there was clearly a seat prepared for her and even the meal was prepared, and yet, she didn't come.

At that time, it was a probably a 'maybe' case, but if her condition is not good, there should be no responsibility taken in not being able to attend to a dinner. Even when she is this young, she is quite the level-headed girl.

"Thank you very much. My impoliteness can be taken as the impoliteness of Lorel, so it is great that you say that." (Chiya) But she is so stiff.

It is not an atmosphere fitting her age.

This is not something that requires an apology, but it is certainly true that what she saw interests me.

About what she saw that could make a girl like this lose herself and faint.

"..."

That's why I stay silent and wait for her next words.

"I rudely tried to peek into the true nature of you and your Kuzunoha Company's entourage. Even if it's my power as a priestess, it is an action that wouldn't be helped if you were to scorn me. If you so wish to, it might be my duty to give you the answer of that result." (Chiya) "No well, I don't really scorn you or anything..." (Makoto)

In the first place, it is something that Senpai made you do.

Also, if a girl of her age were to get the power to see inside others, I don't think it would be strange to want to use it.

Well, the Priestess-san doesn't fit that much into the kids of her age though.

"What I saw in Lime was a gentle large tree. Lush leaves wet in rain were glittering, and...maybe it was making it its dwelling? The young figure of a dragon was visible. I don't know if it's a hint to something, but I felt like he was a likeable person. That's how I viewed it." (Chiya) A gentle large tree.

And a young dragon huh.

I see.

So it is true that she can see things only she can.

But it comprises many truths. There's a high chance that it truly touches their essence.

"Mio-san was...a big black spider. The Calamity Spider. Around its neck there was a big choker, and that spider looked like it was lovingly caring for that choker that had a chain attached to it." (Chiya) So it saw through Mio's true identity perfectly huh.

But a choker...

That's probably hinting at the pact.

In that case...this girl saw that chain connected to me?

"Yeah. There's a lot regarding Mio. As you can see, she is no longer the rampaging monster with no sense of sanity. In most cases, she is safer than in the past so..." (Makoto) "...No matter if I make a racket about it, I have already reached the conclusion that the situation won't change for the better anyways. Please don't mind it." (Chiya) "I see...that's great." (Makoto)

"And, you were...a pure white hyuman-shaped form with no features." (Chiya) Something like a white doll?

No, I don't think that's all there's to it.

It is not something to collapse for.

"A white hyuman shape with no facial features huh. Once again, I don't know what it means." (Makoto) "Sorry. I have awakened this power just recently, so I still can't accurately grasp the meaning of the things that I see." (Chiya) "No, I wasn't blaming you." (Makoto)

"Just that, that white hyuman shape had a crack. A small crack." (Chiya) "A crack?" (Makoto)

"At that part..... Sorry. At that part, in my eyes, it looked like...there was

something incredibly repulsive dwelling there.” (Chiya) Repulsive is quite the word.

Leaving aside my outward appearance, is this the route where it is telling me that even my true nature is ugly?

Something like this really depresses me.

“Was it something so repulsive that it made you collapse?” (Makoto) “I don’t know. I didn’t looking straight at it for long after all.” (Chiya) “I see...” (Makoto)

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

“Please! There’s probably nothing I can do, but...! Please...don’t bring that ‘thing’ outside! If you call yourself a merchant, please!!” (Chiya) “Uo, ehm, please calm down a bit.” (Makoto)

When I thought there was a short silence, the Priestess-san draws closer as if she had lost it.

Moreover, what she asked me to do is something I have no way of doing anything about.

In the first place, what is ‘that’?

Something that not even I know myself, there’s no way I would be able to control if it comes out or not, you know?

While trying to somehow calm the Priestess-san, I was troubled by the request that I was unable to nod at.

The Priestess-san that had returned to herself, was heaving with her shoulders going up and down while having a tension-filled face. Because of the same reason, her whole body was still stiff.

“I-I am very sorry.” (Chiya)

“Uhm, I don’t understand it well, but I will do my best, so it would be better if you didn’t pay much mind to it. You might have seen something dangerous, but it seems like it isn’t showing you the future or anything

like that.” (Makoto) “I heard this from Onee— I mean, Hibiki-sama, but she said that you don’t hold a religious belief towards the Goddess? Ah, it is not like I am condemning you. For the sake of future reference, can I hear about what you rely on, whether it be in the Spirit-samas or in the studies, and the teachings and thoughts you hold?” (Chiya) “Hah? The teachings and thoughts?” (Makoto)

“Yes. The teachings of the Goddess, the teachings of the four elemental Spirits that are born from those, and the truth that a number of scholars have arrived at in their studies. Those kind of things.” (Chiya) “...I don’t have those. I don’t have much interest in religion, even so, if told that science is everything, I also think that’s not the case. What I rely on huh. Hmm....” (Makoto) “...”

The Priestess-san looks at me and was dumbfounded.

Maybe she thought she would get some sort of thoughts of mine immediately.

That’s just unreasonable.

“Well, I do have experience in an art called archery that has created some rules inside myself. Are you fine with that?” (Makoto) “Please let me hear them.” (Chiya)

“It is not something complicated or anything like that. It is to do what you have decided to do with your own power. It is something that you have decided to do, so don’t rely on someone else, and adhere to it with your own discipline. It is quite vague in many points, but it is something like that. But in truth, there’s only one thing that I have decided myself to do though.” (Makoto) “What would that be?” (Chiya)

Maybe she is used to listening to the talk of others, it feels like this Priestess-san is easy to speak with.

...One of the reasons might be because she is a kid though.

“To continue with the bow. In the future, no matter what path I take, no matter what employment I have, no matter what place I end up living in, I have decided to continue with the bow for the rest of my life. That’s all

there is.” (Makoto) “...I see. To continue doing something, no matter what it is, it will require strong will. It may be difficult, but I think it is a splendid thought.” (Chiya) “Thanks. I feel like I am being comforted though.” (Makoto)

“When you decide you will do it, you will definitely do it...” (Chiya) “Priestess-sama? By the way, how are you feeling? If you are still not feeling well, I can provide you with medicine just in case.” (Makoto) “Wah? ah...I-It’s okay.” (Chiya)

“I see. In that case, it is already late, so how about returning to your room? If you need to, I can accompany you partway.” (Makoto) “I will return by myself. I am grateful for your consideration. Sorry for intruding so late in the night. Have a good night.” (Chiya) “Good night.” (Makoto)

How old was the girl I was talking to?

That’s the kind of impression I had remaining even now.

“Ah, Boss. Welcome back. The priestess was here a while ago, you know. Didn’t you meet her on the way?” (Lime) “Yeah, I did. That girl, she came alone to this room huh.” (Makoto) “Yeh, she said she wanted to apologize to Boss. I told her that you are not someone who would mind that, and that I would tell you when you come back, so she should return and sleep, but she didn’t listen.” (Lime) “I see. Well, the talk felt similar to that, Gentle Large Tree-san.” (Makoto) “Hah?” (Lime)

“The white featureless one will go to sleep now. Good night.” (Makoto) “Okay...Good night, Boss.” (Lime)

The day of leaving Limia is close.

The home of Hibiki-senpai, the Limia Kingdom.

I did think that it was somewhat comfortable, but...it became a lot more tiresome visit than I expected.

I don’t have the power to think about the future of the country and the world in whole like Senpai does.

I can’t even understand individuals well, so there’s no way I would be

able to understand hundreds of wills, and the country that is like the crystallization of the race's will.

The Demon Lord, Senpai, and the Kings of each nation probably understand those things though.

But I who can't even grasp the circumstances and tendencies of my company employees, this is just a heavy talk.

I can't do it, but I should at least make an effort huh.

I should try to pursue what I can do.

When I return to Asora, I should try speaking with Tomoe and Shiki about it. Ah, when I return, I should show myself in Kaleneon.

....After that, a small talk with Zef...

Because I was doing some thinking, or more like, a lot happened and it is already this late of an hour, my thoughts were cut off in the middle.

Drowsiness is the best.

Chapter 213: Today Kuzunoha leaves, and Limia must be having it hard

“What did you say just now, Joshua-sama?”

“I have come to suggest retirement, is what I said, Lord Algurio.”
(Joshua)

The words of the guest that Algurio brought in were so unexpected that he asked again.

But the words that were returned weren't that different from before.

The day that Raidou and the Kuzunoha Company left Limia, there was one guest at the Hopelace's residence in the southern part of the kingdom.

The current Head of the Hopelace household, Algurio Hopelace, had returned to his territory in the time that Raidou's group was in the capital, in order to prepare for the welcoming of the guest.

Then he should have finished that business when they were in the capital, is the illogical action Raidou would most likely suggest.

Just that, when a noble takes an appointment, there's a specially troublesome custom of one side visiting and the other receiving.

Joshua feels like that's troublesome too, and Hibiki who has accompanied him also feels the same inside.

But right now is not the time to aggravate the situation. They have departed from the capital with Raidou's group, and so, have arrived at the Hopelace territory to see them off.

“...It seems like it is no joke. But Joshua-sama, it is still too soon for me to retire. My son has gone out temporarily, but I am thinking about having him succeed the household when the time comes.” (Algurio)

“‘As a policy of the royal family, we have prohibited evil intended actions towards Raidou and the Kuzunoha Company’, is what I believe I told you before. You have gone against it. Well, your failures in Rotsgard were also pretty pathetic though. Even so, this is troubling. It seems like you have

thrown around quite a lot of money, but you must have already noticed that this is not a problem that can be solved with money.” (Joshua)

It seemed like Joshua himself didn't intend to take back his words.

In this place, there's only Joshua and Algurio.

Hibiki who's here on the pretext of being the bodyguard of Joshua, and the knight that works for the Hopelace household, were in standby outside the room.

“I have not gone against it. Since then, I have not put a single finger on Raidou, and when they were on their journey to Limia, the family provided them a lodging. Joshua-sama spoke of throwing around money, but that was our contribution for the reconstruction of Rotsgard and the capital. I am sorry for the rudeness but, I can only call this an unjust suspicion from Joshua-sama. I don't have any intentions of escaping responsibility or anything.” (Algurio)

“...It has already been exposed that you were conspiring with a number of nobles in this matter. If there's the need for proof, I will bring that at a later time. Lord Algurio, when the Kuzunoha Company's group lodged in this place, you clearly send assassins in order to murder them, right?” (Joshua)

“ ...”

Those were words filled with confidence.

Algurio maintains silence

In this occasion, his silence affirmed what Joshua has pointed out.

He immediately knew that the amount of information and basis of Joshua were not a bluff.

That's why he decided not to respond by reflex and just wait and see what the other party has to play.

The silence also signified this.

“It ended with the tables being turned, but obviously, it is a big issue. The assassins that you brought to your territory were all people that secretly

acted in the country. Not only did you ignore a recent order from the royal family, you even utilized criminals to realize your lynching. It is in no way how a noble of high class should act.” (Joshua)

“Joshua-sama, there’s the public position that one should think of in all actions. I judged that I had obtained your tacit consent and proceeded to act. The consent of Joshua-sama who is the counsellor of the king means that your consent is the consent of the king. Don’t tell me that you are going to deny the reality of the discussion we had before? There were several others there aside from me, you know?” (Algurio)

“Well now, I don’t remember telling you to kill the Kuzunoha Company, and don’t remember accepting such a foolish idea. And I also don’t remember promising that I didn’t see anything. My consent? If you are saying that I would be ignoring that stupid ‘joke’ you guys did there at that time, you are seriously wrong.” (Joshua)

“You are going to feign ignorance till the end? Isn’t that quite the poor treatment there.” (Algurio)

“Doing crafty actions towards the guests that the royal family had invited to express their gratitude, isn’t that quite the deed? If it’s you who has good intuition, there should be no need for more words than these, right? Please retire. Have your eldest son succeed your household, and disappear from the front stage of politics. It is quite the peaceful way of stepping back from top seat of the family.” (Joshua)

Joshua pushes Algurio into retirement with a smile.

The assassins that attacked Raidou were people send by Algurio and his group, and the proof is already in the hands of Joshua.

This deed would normally merit heavy punishments like cutting off part of their territory, or a demotion of their status.

If it can be solved by just changing the head of the family, it is not a bad trade for the Hopelace household.

But...

As long as the Kuzunoha Company is involved, Algurio can’t easily nod.

Even if it was indirectly, there's no way he would find it pleasant, because it would mean that the power of their household has been chipped off again by them.

"I see. You are really intending to get rid of me huh. But is that okay, Joshua-sama?" (Algurio)

That's why Algurio decided to use his hidden card.

He knew that the other nobles have already been persuaded or incapacitated. He understood that all the groundwork has already been done, but even with that, he still struggled.

"What is it?" (Joshua)

"I know what you have been desperately trying to hide." (Algurio)

"...Ah, I forgot to tell you. Your elder son suffered a big injury a few days ago. We are currently doing our best in his treatment." (Joshua)

"?!"

"His physique has deteriorated quite a bit, but I hope he gets better."
(Joshua)

"Impossible! I have not received a single notice of that! Besides, I was in the capital just a few days ago!" (Algurio)

"Yeah, I am truly sorry. It seems like the report ran late because of the matter with the Kuzunoha Company. I think that the notification will come tomorrow or the day after." (Joshua)

"His life...his life can be saved, right?!" (Algurio)

Without minding about his words, Algurio presses unto Joshua.

After losing Illumgand, the only one left who can succeed him is the eldest son.

It couldn't be helped that he would lose himself.

"Of course. If that wasn't the case, I wouldn't be bringing out a conversation like changing Heads. Ah right, you said something about a secret of mine, right? What was it?" (Joshua)

“ ... ”

Algurio was shocked and revised his knowledge of Joshua.

The Joshua he knows of is a loyal counsellor of the king.

On top of abandoning the succession of the throne, he has a favorable relationship with his little brother Bredda; he is an exceedingly gentle person.

He has never heard of Joshua taking on dirty work.

Even so, the one in front of Algurio is clearly Joshua and not someone else.

Seeing a side of the prince he has never seen before, Algurio felt like he was being cornered.

But he already said that he knew the secret of the prince. Even if he goes without saying it, it won't bring any benefits.

It would actually invite disadvantage, is what he thinks.

Now that it has come to this, he has decided that there's no choice but to drag out the information.

He was being played by Joshua splendidly.

It normally wouldn't be so easy to control the Head of the Hopelace household whose rank comes after that of the royalty.

Joshua was going strong because he knew he would be able to bring out a variety of cards from him.

“If you don't have anything to say, then I want to hear your answer. You are going to wait for the recovery of your eldest son and retire right, Lord Algurio? (Joshua)

“There is.”

“...Hoh. Go ahead.” (Joshua)

“Then prince Joshua –no, princess.” (Algurio)

“ ... ”

“The child that his Majesty had with a woman from the streets, had –at some point in time– become the brother of Bredda-sama. It would be another matter if it were a noble’s concubine; a lady that has the vulgar blood of someone that’s not a noble.” (Algurio)

“ ... ”

“If this were to be known in the country, it would be clear that it would become an unwelcoming situation for Joshua-sama. A princess that has their same blood, moreover, someone that has been calling herself as a prince and deceiving the whole country; the masses would never accept this.” (Algurio)

“ ... ”

“How’s that? How about we act in a manner that benefits us both? I don’t have any plans on retiring in the near future, but when the time comes, I promise that I will peacefully yield the household to my son. He is already the only one who can succeed it after all. If Joshua-sama accepts this, and promise not to do any unnecessary intervention after my retirement as well, I will take the secret of prince to my grave.” (Algurio)

“Fufufufu.” (Joshua)

“Joshua-sama?” (Algurio)

“Ufufu, ahahaha!! Take my secret to your grave? You will? Are you telling me to believe that? I don’t mind. If you think you are able to, try doing it.” (Joshua)

Joshua laughs away the proposal of Algurio about feigning ignorance.

Being sure that she would be able to finish this while maintaining several cards, Joshua pushed aside the threat.

“Are you telling me to try and expose it? It makes me question your sanity.” (Algurio)

“Revealing a card –that can’t even be considered one– on your own... that’s quite funny.” (Joshua)

...

“Just like you said, I am a woman. And my mother is a plebeian. Lord Algurio, your information is correct. It is certainly true that if this were to leak outside, it would plunge the capital into great confusion, and it will create a big opening in Limia for foreign countries to exploit.” (Joshua)

“...That’s right. So Joshua-sama, you have no choice but to accept my proposal. Right?” (Algurio)

Joshua didn’t overlook the small opening in the words of Algurio.

“That moment of hesitation there, is telling me everything. The information of me being a woman...if this were to be known, the ones troubled would be the royal family and you nobles.” (Joshua)

“It is a problem of the royal family, but it is not a problem for us.” (Algurio)

“Even though you already know. If it were in an era without war, in a peaceful country, this information would be incredibly valuable and the uses would be many. But in a situation where we are fighting with another race, it can’t even be considered a card. It is simply useless information.” (Joshua)

“ ... ”

“If the current Limia were to show an opening, there’s the chance that the demon race will be attacking again. Even if that doesn’t happen, Gritonia, Aion, and Lorel, will do a variety of interventions in our domestic affairs in the pretense of preserving the frontlines. Hyumans are not a monolith after all.” (Joshua)

“No matter the reality, many hyumans still believe that this war with the demon race will finish with the victory of the hyuman race huh...” (Algurio)

Algurio can also see the situation of the war.

He has also stood in the battlefield, and he understands that the war with the demon race is a serious one that has the survival of the race at stake.

That's why he had Illumgand go to Rotsgard in order to polish his commanding ability and battle power to high levels.

Algurio speaks of an immature ideal; he wanted to have Illumgand work in the battlefield, and in exchange, return his eldest son to begin his education towards succeeding as the Head.

"Yeah. I have done this much, and today, beginning with lord here, I will be swinging a hatchet at many other nobles as well. In the near future, I will be revealing this to a set number of people inside the castle beyond a certain standing, and at the same time, I will be preparing to leave the castle. In other words, it will be a simultaneous strike between everyone and me, right?" (Joshua)

"Are you saying that you will be abandoning the reformation that is merely halfway -no, that has barely started?" (Algurio)

"To establish a big reformation, I am way too dangerous. Because I am holding a big bomb after all. That's why I have already requested another person to take the leading role in changing the country. Also...if it is known that I am a woman, Bredda will have no choice but to resolve himself to be the king of the next generation." (Joshua)

"...The hero Hibiki huh." (Algurio)

It is a dangerous conversation, moreover, it is an important one, but it is not something big enough to warrant the company of the hero.

And yet Hibiki came as a bodyguard, which Algurio reads into it deeply.

"Who knows. How about confirming it, not from the stage, but from the spectator's seat?" (Joshua)

From beginning to end, Joshua didn't panic at all, even her body spoke of her indifference and calm.

With her blood and gender, Joshua understands that she is in a position that would not even allow her to serve at the side of the king.

From her way of speaking, Algurio could tell that plenty enough.

And he could also tell that she had the resolve of making it end with a

simultaneous strike no matter what.

“...Fuh~, this is my lost. Well, you got me there. You really had some sharp fangs hidden there. It is my total defeat.” (Algurio)

After a while of silence, Algurio makes a bright expression as if an evil spirit had come off his shoulders, and said these words in a gentle expression like that of Joshua.

“I am glad to hear you have understood, Lord Algurio.” (Joshua)

“Don’t mind it, I am already a geezer. I will just think of it as a good opportunity. If I can receive it happily, there’s no right or wrong. Well, for my retirement’s farewell gift, I wouldn’t have any objections if you accompany me once in a dance. Of course, you will be filling the female role, Joshua-sama.” (Algurio)

“If it’s only that much, I will happily be your partner. Well then, this matter has been wrapped up, so I will be taking my leave. See you at a later time.” (Joshua)

“Yes, later.” (Algurio)

Joshua stands up with a smiling face.

Algurio also stands up with a smile that didn’t lose to hers.



“Good job, Joshua.”

“Yeah, it was tiring, Hibiki. But it has ended as Hopelace also yielding their family headship. With this, the noble clique that is clinging to the old predisposition is as good as gone.” (Joshua)

“Turning over half of the nobles with that inclination into enemies; a sane person wouldn’t be able to do that. Now if we are able to take away the eyes of the outside interference, their strength will naturally dwindle.” (Hibiki)

Joshua answers the welcoming of Hibiki who was in the room.

Normally, Hibiki shows her usual respect towards the prince, but when

they are alone, the atmosphere is that of two close friends.

“The young nobles that will be succeeding the households are mostly influenced by Hibiki’s thoughts already. From here on, there will be progress.” (Joshua)

“And, how much did that old man show?” (Hibiki)

“Our side’s cards were not as effective as I thought. That we have proof of them going against our orders and attacked the Kuzunoha Company, the fact that I am a woman, and that the eldest son is currently in the middle of treatment. About that much.” (Joshua)

“...Instead of your secret, wouldn’t it have been better to attack with the dishonest amassing of wealth in this place?” (Hibiki)

“It was a hidden card from their side. He utilized it, so I turned it over. I told him that if he were to expose it, it would chip away the national power of Limia, and he won’t be getting away unscathed from that either.” (Joshua)

“That old man is already old enough to be senile huh. To speak it out without realizing that it wouldn’t even serve as a card.” (Hibiki)

Hibiki sighs as if amazed.

“It probably helped that we crushed most of his surroundings and stole his leeway before tackling the matter regarding the attack to the Kuzunoha Company. It ended with a result that was close to what was planned. He said something admirable like asking me to be lenient towards the nobles that had cooperated in the act.” (Joshua)

“‘Close to’?” (Hibiki)

“...Should I say, as expected of a high noble? At the end, he made a bright smile as he accepted his defeat.” (Joshua)

“Admirable... no, you mean crafty, right?” (Hibiki)

Hibiki rephrases it.

It wasn’t an admirable attitude nor was it a manly one; it meant that Algurio was able to splendidly smooth it over by understanding the

situation.

“That’s right. I was expecting him to get exasperated and rage when I cornered him, but after the retirement talk was brought down, leaving aside the matter with his eldest son, he was pretty composed. Looking at that, we can’t lower our guards. It was as if he were announcing that he can still act.” (Joshua)

“How troublesome. So it really was the right choice to reserve that card of the eldest son.” (Hibiki)

Joshua nods at Hibiki’s words.

“If Lord Algurio were to lose the life of his other son as well, we would have literally struck each other down. Limia would have fallen into chaos.” (Joshua)

“For a moment, I also thought about the long term method of having the eldest son die at that time, and wait for the current Head to die from old age though. When thinking about it, a high noble like Hopelace should have seeds spread all over the place, so I thought that successors would be sprouting from here and there, and that’s why I decided it was better to have him feel indebted by saving his eldest son though.” (Hibiki)

“...Hibiki, that’s underestimating Lord Algurio too much. It is certainly true that he has many mistresses, and has as many children with his blood, but...” (Joshua)

“Now there, if I listen to that talk, my evaluation of that old man will only lower. I am actually beginning to feel that I have overestimated him.” (Hibiki)

“But that’s a well-known secret. The children that are accepted as the heirs are only those two. The dead Illumgand, and the eldest son that was in the battlefield. When the mistress had a child, he provided them with plenty enough consolation money and threw them away, after all.” (Joshua)

“ ... ”

Joshua talks about the inhuman actions of Algurio as if they were not a

big deal.

On the other hand, Hibiki responds to the talk about him throwing away mistresses one after the other with a complicated expression.

“A number of them have tried to use the blood relation as a weapon to enter the Hopelace household, but the lord took care of them without exceptions. Playing things are playing things, and it displayed that they did not intend to have them involved in the household. If the eldest son were to die, they would have probably chosen a relative to succeed it.” (Joshua)

“It makes me want to say that he shouldn’t do those kind of plays to begin with. Well, I have now understood well that the protection of the Hopelace household is thorough, but...they are really concerned with the lineage.” (Hibiki)

“For good and bad, they are nobles after all. Even when he is like that, he doesn’t do outrageous things towards the obedient populace, and is also considered a kind and tolerant landlord. For the poor lands he would postpone the tax collection, and when the people increase, he would use his own money in order to increase the farming land and jobs.” (Joshua)

“...However, he lies about the tax that the country has, and the own money he uses is in the end, from the tax that he obtained from the people and he uses it to enrich his own clothing.” (Hibiki)

“...That’s why I said, for good and bad. And in reality, the Hopelace territory is famous for being easy to live in, and he is being evaluated as an excelling landlord.” (Joshua)

For Limia, the Hopelace territory is known to be easy to live in and being a wealthy land.

Many people enter it, and there are few who want to leave.

As long as the people are obedient, Algurio shows them a government that recompenses it after all.

Of course, this was simply a difference between obvious exploitation and ingenious exploitation though.

That's why the reputation of the Kusunoha Company in the territories influenced by the Hopelace household was so bad.

It was obvious since rumours were flowing around.

From the rumours that have been circulating, the one that is most consolidated is that Kusunoha is evil and Hopelace is just.

For the people that live without problems and are actually being cared for by their feudal lord, Algurio, there's no way they would think of him as evil, so this is also an obvious result.

Moreover, the tax profit that he provides to the royal family is more than that of other territories, even when he is reported to do fraudulent practices.

A company that is an enemy of the Hopelace, even if they are guests invited by the royal family, there were many nobles and general residents who didn't welcome this.

Hibiki and Joshua utilized this.

As a move to destroy the nobles that were too into the old doctrine of noble supremacy.

With the attack of Raidou as the onset, they snuffed out the people that acted on a sense of defeat while Raidou was in his stay at Limia.

Lime Latte worked as a cooperator of the company, so the plan advanced smoothly, and combined with the evidence they had gathered of frauds until now of the many nobles, they were able to put it in motion.

And so, the Kusunoha Company were used as bait.

By the way, Raidou doesn't know of this.

Because not all of the interferences reached him after all.

He was simply slightly bothered by the fact that he made the priestess collapse, leisurely gazed at the recovery of Limia, and moderately ignored the talk about business.

Mio had sensed something shady to a certain degree, but she limited

herself to simply brushing away the sparks. Because she already had an objective bigger than that, which is to have Raidou learn that Hibiki is a person he can't be together with.

After being promised by Hibiki that she would be giving retribution to the assassins and the ones involved, Lime was persuaded.

In the depths of Lime's heart, he felt anger. He was sure that it wouldn't be disadvantageous for the company, so he decided to cooperate.

"But in that case, even if we were to have the eldest son be slightly indebted, it doesn't seem like we will be able to cajole the Hopelace household. As I thought, it might be necessary to prepare ourselves for a long term solution." (Hibiki)

Hibiki recalls the time when she saved the Hopelace's eldest son in the battlefield.

He is faithful to his father, and even though he is young, Hibiki didn't feel youth in him.

Even if he were to become the Head, she is sure that he would be heavily influenced by Algurio.

The trouble will most likely continue.

But well, thanks to Kuzunoha Company, the situation has progressed quite a lot, so looking at the whole picture, it is a positive result.

She knew this isn't the time to be dejected, so she renewed her mood.

"Even if we have the puppet of Lord Algurio take over the household, there's not much meaning. That's why..." (Joshua)

"..."

Hibiki was about to answer with a 'right', but seeing that Joshua's words still continued, she makes a dubious expression.

"Let's change him." (Joshua)

"...How?" (Hibiki)

"The ones changing gentlemen are always women, right?" (Joshua)

“To reach that conclusion, I feel like you have been reading and listening to literary works way too much.” (Hibiki)

“Really? I admit that I am a young woman with a lot of superficial knowledge of sex, but I think that it is actually an effective method, you know? At the very least, I think there’s plenty enough worth in trying.” (Joshua)

Joshua speaks with a serious face.

“There’s no disadvantages for us in doing it, but...” (Hibiki)

The enunciation of Hibiki’s words was bad.

“He is currently looking at his lost arm and thinning legs in despair. It is said that the best moment to make someone fall is when they are weakened.” (Joshua)

“You are planning on doing it immediately?” (Hibiki)

It was a vulgar talk, but Hibiki didn’t retort to the contents and asked if they were going to be sending someone directly while he is still in the middle of his treatment.

It seems like Hibiki also thinks that it is a good moment to do it.

“I have already begun. The ones nursing him are all experienced children of houses with a somewhat high standing and strong people. The appearance and age are all within the range of his likes that have been determined beforehand. There’s around 6 of them gathered.” (Joshua)

“...”

Hibiki is speechless that the plan has already started.

She thought that it was great she didn’t say anything about her going to visit him herself and changing his own thinking.

Because it would turn into getting in the way of Joshua after all.

“The only thing we can’t do anything about is his arm. There will be six people working on his treatment and nursing, so by the time his legs recover and he is able to move, he would have probably placed his hands

on one of them.” (Joshua)

“As expected, that arm can’t be helped huh. But Joshua, even if you say that you have something to do with those women and he does place a hand on them, aren’t the chances of them going out or marrying pretty low? To change him, I think there’s the need of at least that much good will though.” (Hibiki)

When Hibiki saved him, his right arm had rotted, and that poison was about to further corrode his body.

Both of his legs were mangled, and from its looks, it seemed to be completely late.

It is safe to say that he was saved mostly because of luck.

At that instant, she cut off his right arm, only did emergency treatment, and just in case, she brought his right arm back as well, but Hibiki thought that that arm was already beyond saving.

And that really was the case.

Actually, just having his legs connected can be considered worthy of praise for the healing magicians.

“If those six make him fall that’s good; even if it ends as just playing around...I still have a certain one prepared just in case.” (Joshua)

“A certain one?” (Hibiki)

“Professed to be a top-grade healing magician, but in truth, she is the number one wife candidate.” (Joshua)

“Chiya-chan is definitely a no.” (Hibiki)

Hearing that she was a top-class healer, Hibiki mentions her comrade Chiya as a joke.

“If I did something like that, not only would it be a diplomatic strife with Lorel, it would instantly turn into war.” (Joshua)

“Then I am relieved. And, is it someone I know?” (Hibiki)

“No. In the eyes of Hopelace, it would be the second daughter of a

slightly lower ranked house. 'Divorced once, and no kids'." (Joshua)

"Did he have that kind of taste?" (Hibiki)

"Whether she is a housewife or a widow, he doesn't care. It is just that he seems to have a strange taste for older women." (Joshua)

"For the Limia nobles, they normally say that past their twenties, the value of the woman falls after all. Even though there's still much more to develop as a woman. In that point, there are way too many idiots. Then, is that second daughter a leftover? In other words, desperate?" (Hibiki)

"She is already 23 after all. I think that internally, she is quite impatient already. There were no marriage proposals in this one year, and she jumped on my proposal. The other party is a Hopelace, so there weren't any complains from the parents. It was an immediate answer." (Joshua)

"That person is your real card? Is it going to be okay?" (Hibiki)

"I will be directing and cooperating, so I think we will be able to expect something though." (Joshua)

"I see." (Hibiki)

'Isn't it a weak hand?', is what Hibiki thought.

23 with a history of being divorced, that reduces the worth of a woman in Limia quite a lot.

Leaving aside the man in question, it wouldn't be easy to convince the parents.

The hurdle is too high and it isn't something that one can expect much, is what she thought.

"Well, she will be devoutly nursing his loss arm to its original state, so she will probably leave a big impression. Moreover, she matches his own preference and her parentage has no problems, and the girl herself is eager, so in the worst case, she can become a mistress." (Joshua)

"...Healing his arm, you say? Didn't you say it was currently impossible?" (Hibiki)

“It is impossible for us. But when I tried to consult about the matter of Hopelace to Raidou, he said that something like that can be easily done.” (Joshua)

“You are saying that he is able to grow an arm out of that shoulder that is still in that dark-purple shade?” (Hibiki)

“He was going to give the job to Mio-dono, saying that if it’s with magic it can be done immediately. But something like that would be noticed by people of Hopelace, so I politely refused. When I asked him if we can do this by treating it with medicine, he said there’s no problem with that either. Of course, because of the process, it increased the price by quite a bit more, but I bought it. After acquiring the information completely, I plan on having the girl that will be doing the treatment to enter.” (Joshua)

The Hopelace house that not only got entangled with the Kuzunoha Company in Rotsgard, they are also the very masterminds that send assassins at them.

Even if it is Raidou, if he were to mention that matter, he could refuse, is what Joshua was also thinking.

But conversely, it could be used as a hand to harass Algurio or the people involved, is how she thought.

And so, while taking utmost care in not having Mio and Lime hold suspicions, she persisted in the conversation with Raidou.

“His arm...with medicine?” (Hibiki)

“It seems it is pills and ointment. There is the need for magic support, but it is an outrageous craft. Well, it helps us quite a lot at this moment though.” (Joshua)

Hibiki mutters with a complicated expression.

Because she was picturing a side to be happy about, and a side that would be troublesome.

“Just like planned, we will have him marry someone within those seven, and if he were to make the others concubines or mistresses, it would make

it a lot easier for us. They are all girls that know who prepared the table for them and what they are expected to do after all.” (Joshua)

(My real objective would be getting their gratitude and invite the child of Algurio, Amelia Hopelace...we would be able to not only change the Head, but the whole body of the Hopelace house. If it's her who doesn't have any connections, Hibiki and I can easily send retainers that support our notions after all. But that girl is...from the Kuzunoha Company, or more like, the student of him. The variables are so many that I can't use her. It would be the best if we were to obtain the cooperation of the company, but if by chance, we were to invite displeasure and she ends up in a favorable relationship with a foreign country, all would go down.) (Joshua)

Joshua looks back at one of the ideas she originally had and laughs.

The scholarship student in Rotsgard Academy, Amelia.

It was already investigated that she is the child of Algurio and a mistress.

And so, Joshua knew that Amelia doesn't think well of the Hopelace house, and she thought that depending on the case, she could ask her to help in their weakening.

Taking into consideration her relationship with Raidou, this idea was not implemented though.

“...I feel like Joshua has plenty possibility to be a ruler. Isn't it fine to become the queen? If Bredda says something about it, I will persuade him.” (Hibiki)

“Please stop the jokes. I don't have the capability to become a ruler. A ruler needs to have the strong power of attracting people. The larger the country, the more your individual governmental affairs ability comes into play and you have to work as a symbol of the country, make the people and retainers think of you; that's what it means to become a ruler. If we talk about people that have experience, by making a careful selection, we would be apply to find as many we want.” (Joshua)

“A symbol that people can hold up high has the ability of a ruler huh.

Being a queen has a strong impact, and I think you are plenty qualified though.” (Hibiki)

“That can only be called a curious point. Bredda has the ability to make people help him unconsciously, and support him; that’s the kind of appeal he has. But the one that has a stronger appeal than him, moreover, has practical experience as well is...you, Hibiki.” (Joshua)

“I don’t have the blood of royalty. I am excluded from the very beginning.” (Hibiki)

“It will increase the process by one, but there’s enough ways to do it. For me, that’s the ideal for the future. If the day comes when Limia receives a queen, it shouldn’t be me, but you.” (Joshua)

“Hello? A dependable beautiful friend and collaborator of mine, is encouraging me to marry her little brother. What should I do?” (Hibiki)

“Please accept it. I have opened the path wide, and after that, I plan on watching over from afar as well.” (Joshua)

“...Give me a break.” (Hibiki)

Right now there’s still things to do in Limia kingdom.

The reformation forces centered around Hibiki are gaining power as the capital’s reconstruction advances.

The upheaval that will occur inside Limia, the ones that will work as an explosive agent for that is a small scale company that was invited by them; this truth will not be left in any record.

Just a single person’s memories will that name remain.

The winter that is providing a temporary armistice for sporadic fights.

The Kuzunoha Company and Raidou are existences that will be bringing about a big influence, not only to Limia, but to all the upper stratum of every country. It will become a tacit reality that will be edged in them.

Chapter 214: Speaking of winter...

Now that I think about it, Limia is really a wealthy and easy to live in country.

I remember Hibiki-senpai, the priestess Chiya-san, Prince Joshua, and the other many that came with us to the national border to see us off.

I felt like it was quite extravagant for an escort, but it seems they also had some other business.

If it's that, I can understand.

Even till the end, Chiya-san didn't open her heart, and had a stiff face from beginning to end.

She didn't leave the side of Senpai, and it seems I have become quite the scary existence.

With Chiya-san in that state, and the good willed attitude of Hibiki-senpai and prince Joshua, I thought that their load of work must been heavier because of that, which made me depressed.

...When looking at the priestess being all business-like and doing her best because it is needed, I just can't see her being the same age as Rinon, and within me, she had become Chiya-san.

I can't bring myself to call her Chiya-chan.

Senpai calls her that way though.

"Even so, this is my first time coming here but, is Kaleneon always snowing?" (Lime) It is Lime.

Right.

The reason I began thinking that Limia is a wealthy land was because of this snowy landscape.

I can't see a speck of light brown ground.

It is also because this is the outside of the town, but this is the very definition of a snow country. No, it makes me wonder if this is even a

place where people would be able to live in.

Honestly speaking, I have grown tired of looking at it, and to reach the town, there's the need to walk for several more minutes.

Let's hop there.

I wanted to show myself to the Winged-kin and Mist Lizards that are guarding the national borders, so I didn't teleport directly to the town that Eva is in.

And I thought it would be nice to walk through the snowy path, which was a mistake.

The path had snow pushed to the sides and it rose like walls, making it feel like an enclosed area. Are they doing this everyday?

They must be. If not, the path would be covered in snow and I wouldn't be able to tell which is the path.

How fearsome is the north.

When heading to the demon race territory, it turns from a snowy field into an icy one after all. The wind also turns hectic. Well, at least Kaleneon is better since you are able to live in it after shoveling the snow huh.

"Isn't it nice to have a lot of snow? If you put sweet concentrated fruit juice, it can become a splendid desert-desu yo, Lime." (Mio) "Nee-san... frozen sweets taste good in hot weather, but in this cold it is just..." (Lime) Mio's thought has probably been imagined by Japanese people at least once.

...Like for example; grade schoolers that love shaved ice.

Tired of seeing the same pure white landscape for who knows how long, I didn't feel in the mood for that.

And in reality, for the people that have to do work in this kind of place everyday, they wouldn't think of such an idea.

"Normally, there's the need of shaving the ice, so in a place like this where it snows this much, I can eat until I am satisfied-desu wa." (Mio) "If you eat too much at once, your head will hurt, Mio. At this rate, it will be

the same sight until we reach the town so, let's hop there." (Makoto) "Yes, Waka-sama." (Mio)

"That will be a great help-ssu, Boss."

For some reason the two began a conversation about food, but it seems like internally, they both felt the same way as me, they gave an immediate answer to my proposal.

With a Mist Gate, we hop to the only town currently existing in Kaleneon.

The location is the second floor of the Adventurer Guild branch in Kaleneon.

When going to the town, we normally teleport there.

"Ah, are you new adventurers?"

"Idiot! They are from Kuzunoha Company! The representative Raidou-sama, his escort Mio-sama, and..."

The staff member stationed there mistook us for adventurers.

But the person on her side soon retorted to this.

This is the first time I see someone mistaking us, so maybe she is someone that hasn't been here for long.

But well, the staff member that corrected her was stuck in her words cause it seems like it is the first time she sees Lime.

"I am Lime Latte. I do miscellaneous jobs for Kuzunoha Company-ssu. I am a former adventurer so well, just be at ease around me." (Lime) "So you can become an employee of Kuzunoha Company even when you have the history of being an adventurer..."

"You, just shut up already."

"Aw..., I-I am sorry~."

The newbie staff member returns a reaction that's off point towards the self-introduction of Lime.

It is not like the Kuzunoha Company doesn't employ adventurers

though.

Being chewed by her superior for a second time, she scratches her head as she apologizes to Lime.

“I have come to check the state of the town. Can you tell me where Eva and Ruria are?” (Makoto) “At this time...I think both are at the hall. There have been unexpected snowfalls in succession, and adding up with the current situation where it is getting colder by the moment, they should be in the middle of a meeting.”

“As expected, this amount of snow is a lot.” (Makoto)

“It seems like removing the snow is taking quite the amount of personnel and expenses, by using magic, it is possible to settle the matter for the moment but...it is easy to see that in the future, this problem will be continuing, so they are thinking of a solution for the root of the problem.”

“You are pretty detailed.” (Makoto)

“Even if we are the Adventurer Guild, having the town enclosed by snow in the winter isn’t a desirable situation. If there’s a good countermeasure for this, we won’t be frugal in our cooperation. Of course, there’s already permission from the tops.”

“For this town –no, for the country, the Adventurer Guild is a big power. I look forward to working with you from now on.” (Makoto) “Here as well.”

She lowers her head deeply.

Kuzunoha Company is in charge of practically the whole supply of goods in this town, and we are being held up relatively high.

I have already gotten used to this treatment.

It seems like they are in the middle of a meeting, so I didn’t use thought transmission and look at the state of the town while heading for the specially big building that is used as the center for administration.

“The energy is still insufficient-ssu ne.” (Lime)

“In the first place, it is a mistake to compare it to Tsige and Rotsgard, Lime.” (Makoto) “I know that, but with the Guild and the state of the town, I feel like there’s a variety of things that are lacking.” (Lime) “Well, yeah.” (Makoto)

Even though it is not to the level of when we were walking through the walls of snow, even when we entered the town, there was still a certain pressure, or more like, a sense of enclosure.

As if the snow that is falling continuously in the town was piling up and silently cornering the whole town.

The environment is completely different after all.

It seems like the land Eva and Ruria had as their territory in the past didn’t have such deep snow.

This place in itself was made half because of our own circumstances after all.

It would be nice if we could be of help somehow.

“To begin with, there’s no soil to grow delicious things with how the town currently is-desu wa ne. Instead of calling it a newborn, it is more like on the verge of death-desu wa.” (Mio) Mio doesn’t have mercy.

“That’s saying too much-ssu, Nee-san. I concur with what you say though.” (Lime) “Eva is doing her best though.” (Makoto)

Lime and I were of the same opinion as what Mio said at the latter half.

What Mio said about there being no soil to grow delicious things might be referring to the lack of energy.

“This is! Raidou-sama, Mio-sama. It’s great that you have come visit us.”

After walking for a while, the guard of the building confirmed our figures, and after fixing his posture, he welcomed us.

“I didn’t give any contact beforehand, but I have come here to see the faces of Eva and Ruria. Can I meet them?” (Makoto) If it can’t be done immediately, I can just walk around town for a bit more.

Thinking about it in that way, I ask.

“...Right now, it might be important to have the opinion of someone that is not a resident, or so it seems. I will guide you immediately.”

He probably conversed with someone in thought transmission, the guard opened the path for us.

The one that is currently stationed here is...Ema or a friend of hers.

No...maybe a hyuman or a demi-human that they have selected.

We were guided by a Highland Orc that came from the inside, and the meeting room.....we pass by it and stand in front of the private room of Eva.

Weren't they in the middle of a meeting?

Maybe it didn't go well.

Just me being here is probably enough to make one's stomach hurt.

“Come in.”

When the Orc knocks, a voice comes from inside.

Eva's voice.

From the voice, I could perceive exhaustion.

“Long time no see, Eva. I heard that you are being quite troubled by this cold and snow.” (Makoto) Since coming to Kaleneon, Eva has been using formal speech with me even though she is older, which I don't like.

Before I got used to it, it felt incredibly uncomfortable, but now I think I am somehow able to talk normally.

“Raidou-sensei.” (Eva)

Looking at Eva straight from the front, I could certainly tell that she was incredibly tired.

Things like make-up, her hair, and her attire; the parts that she would normally not be negligent about, I could tell that she was slowly growing negligent about it.

In my time at Japan, I wouldn't have been able to tell this at all.

This is one of the specialties that I learned when coming to this world. I don't know whether it will be useful or not though.

This is a standard ability that humans come equipped with though.

"Honestly...there's a lack of personnel. And the money...the money to move people... We are training people specialized snow removal magic, but as expected, we won't be able to deal with it promptly. It may be a taboo word but, because it is winter...it is a situation I feel like giving up in." (Eva) "Hearing that, can I assume that the pioneering and cultivation of new land is not advancing?" (Makoto) "Yeah. The fields that we have, have been plowed and crops are being cultivated, but we were unable to secure the planned scale." (Eva) "With this amount of snow, it can't be helped." (Makoto)

"I think...there's plenty enough methods to deal with it. But the problem is that I am lacking in experience and knowledge. In my time as a noble, if I had learned of how to manage the territory from the nobles that possess territories in the north, the situation might have been different. Seriously, just what was my past self doing?" (Eva) Stressing over that won't help in any way.

Eva must be pretty tired out.

Seeing her muttering is kind of scary.

"Even for Ema and the others that were dispatched here, with this much snow, I don't think it is a matter of experience. It is the first year, so in the beginning, I think it would be best to not be completely influenced by the plans and continue in a pace that is adequate." (Makoto) There's still several years of leeway before we get involved with foreign countries after all.

It wouldn't be good to hurry it.

"We can't do that!!" (Eva)

"...Eh?" (Makoto)

It was an unexpected reaction.

Eva suddenly raised her tone.

“I am not at an age where I can waste year after year! You know just how important time is for Kaleneon right...Raidou-sensei? I am sorry for shouting.” (Eva) “N-No, don’t mind it.” (Makoto)

It has become an atmosphere where I can’t say that since it is an unexpected situation, it should be okay to think up a countermeasure this year.

“Ema-san and the others have become a big help as well. They introduced a number of crops that generate heat, and even if it’s not all, there’s some crops that were in the land of Kaleneon in the past growing in the fields as well. The growth is fast, and the snow of the surroundings is being removed in an acceptable level, so it is become a priceless treasure.” (Eva) It is the first time I hear of such a crop.

...No, from the crops that I was taught of the wasteland, Asora, and this world, there were no hot things.

If it becomes an ordinary occurrence when gathering them, it is obvious that I wouldn’t know huh.

I have practically no involvement in the farm work after all.

The amount of people that know the specialties of the crops that are in the middle of growing are few.

The most I know is that the crops of Asora require a lot of nutrients, and when these crops are grown outside of Asora, it becomes a situation that can’t be laughed at.

A crop that produces heat huh.

Must be a wasteland one.

“It is an amount of snow that would even make you lose the location of the fields after all. Ah, but if it just melts the snow, wouldn’t the earth get all soppy because of water?” (Makoto) It is not like the snow will disappear.

It most likely only melts, so obviously, the melted snow becomes water.

Can it be used in the fields?

I feel like it would become a paddy field though.

“Regarding the water, we have a root crop that has good affinity to it, so there’s no problem. Of course, we are contemplating in creating a waterway to drain it to a river. Just that...” (Eva) “Just that?” (Makoto)

“When the water flows through the waterway and gets slightly apart from the field, it ends up freezing. On top of that, the three rivers that are flowing around the surroundings of the town, are currently all frozen and can’t be used.” (Eva) “...”

A river frozen over?

It is a word that I am not used to, so my thoughts stopped for a second there.

...No well, it is running water, so when it gets cold it does freeze huh.

The harbour of the demon race is practically on an unusable state from the end of fall to spring, that’s why they wanted to secure an ice-free port so much.

If the sea freezes, it is a given that rivers will freeze too.

“The bottom part seems like it is not frozen, so it is not like it can’t be used at all. By melting the snow, we can procure water for living. It is a fact that we will have to utilize unnecessary personnel and it is more trouble.” (Eva) Eva places a hand on her forehead and makes a small sigh.

I see. So in the end, they are going around in circles.

The lack of personnel, and the snow and cold that is the main culprit of this.

If we are able to at least reduce the trouble it causes in the daily lives of the town, it would make it more comfortable.

Like for example...

“If there’s something that can be used as reference, I don’t mind if it’s

about anything, I would like to hear it.” (Eva) Oh, the moment I was thinking about saying my idea, she came out with convenient words.

“You are saying that if we reduce the trouble that the snow in the town and the fields is reduced, you will be able to put your hands in other matters, right?” (Makoto) “Yes.”

“Then the irrigation canals that are being used in the town and fields, sewers, the barrels and vases used as water storages...how about changing the roof of the houses to make it produce light heat in order to make it so that it doesn’t freeze?” (Makoto) Have the places where the snow piles up produce heat on their own, and with that, we melt the snow in one end, making it easier.

The footing will be consistently filled with water, but thinking about the amount of work it will take, I don’t think it can be put to practical use.

“That has been taking into account. We adopted that method by the proposal of the dwarfs, but we are way too lacking in production materials. And regarding the houses and waterways that have already been made, there would be the need of a large scale construction work, so it isn’t progressing as expected.” (Eva) “Ah, so you have already tried that huh.” (Makoto)

“When Raidou-sensei had gone to do a business discussion with the demon race, you said that instead of having the waterways for drainage in hard to see places, it would be better to have them underground, right?” (Eva) “I did say that.” (Makoto)

“At that time, the dwarfs had the idea. When it lowers to a set temperature, there’s a sedge used in ceramics that produces heat and doesn’t freeze. It is currently being implemented in the roofs and as a material for construction works. Just that the manufacturing can’t catch up, so it will most likely show its effectivity next year.” (Eva) In other words, it won’t become a solution for the current situation.

And they have already thought of the years to come and begun preparing them.

I have underestimated them.

As expected of the Elder dwarfs.

I haven't brought many people here, but even with the low numbers, they are doing their very best.

Fuh~, I should think about the recruitment of dwarfs from Lorel, or I will feel bad for them.

Cause their environment itself is at a place with a relative amount of volcanoes.

...

Volcanoes?

Speaking of volcanoes, there's many ores...no not only that...the smell of sulfur...Oh!

Hot springs!

That's right, it is not about the dwarfs' living environment or the mineral resources.

This is it!

The memories I had of travelling with my family revived in an instant.

"Hot springs!" (Makoto)

I ended up abruptly raising my voice.

But it has come to me.

No, I remembered it.

"Hot springs? If I remember correctly, it is a local word of Lorel. Warm water that gushes forth, is what I think it meant..." (Eva) It seems like Eva knew of hot springs, her words didn't carry certainty, but she still said it.

That's not it.

Hot springs can't be defined with such cheap words.

You can enter them, at times, you can drink it as well.

The soul of Japanese that love bathing...but well, let's leave that aside for now.

“I honestly feel complicated in having it being defined as simple warm water, but it is that.” (Makoto) “What is it about that hot spring? Don’t tell me, are you saying that hot springs can also come out from Kaleneon?” (Eva) “There’s plenty enough chance. But what I thought of is the method to use the hot springs.” (Makoto) “Ehm...hot springs are supposed to come out from locations with a pretty high temperature. And even in the times when Kaleneon was in good health, I hadn’t heard of hot springs, so even if you suddenly speak about a usage for them...” (Eva) Eva is bewildered.

“Hot springs come out even in cold places. In the place that I visited in the past, it was winter, and was used as an effective method to remove snow. Because it is water that is warm the whole year after all.” (Makoto) “...In other words, you are saying that that place is cold enough to have snow and be able to freeze, and yet, they have warm water, that is hot enough to let out steam, flowing all year long?” (Eva) Oh, she is making an incredibly doubtful gaze.

But I don’t think hot springs rely on the temperature of the area.

Is it not the same here?

Maybe I should check out the hot springs in Lorel just in case?

“That’s right. Well, I think that it will be fine to have warm water in places that are currently troubled with the freezing and the fallen snow. At the very least, it will decrease the trouble with personnel quite a lot, right?” (Makoto) “True, that would be the case if it can actually be realized. The Adventurer Guild has a massive amount of snow removal requests and it has become hard to find requests in other matters.” (Eva) “Places like roofs, I honestly can’t think of anything right now about it, but for main streets and the waterways utilized for irrigation, it will be dealt with, right?” (Makoto) The more I think about it, the more useful it sounds.

Thanks, hot spring district I forgot the name of.

“In other words, Raidou-sensei is saying that we should look for hot springs in this state of affairs?” (Eva) The expression of Eva who was sitting down in front of me was saying: ‘that is unreasonable’.

...Does she think I am a person that would say something unreasonable?

Why is it, I feel kind of depressed.

Something like looking for hot springs can be done by us, and with that as the onset, I think that the town will be able to move.

“No, we will be the ones doing it. Also, you have the construction work to look after, and looking at the situation of the town, it would be impossible for you. The point is that it is fine as long as there’s warm water, so in this moment of urgency, if we are able to endure the situation with this, it will be fine.” (Makoto) “...Where are we going to find warm water at this time?” (Eva) “I have a perfect plan for that. If you leave it to us, we will begin tomorrow or the day after. At a price.” (Makoto) “If the Kusunoha Company will move, our side’s weight will lower, so I will do something about the money, but...no, I understand. There’s still things I have to take care of, so I will believe in Raidou-sensei. The talk of Sensei leading Kusunoha Company to take over the country has become famous in the taverns.” (Eva) “...As extra compensation, I would like you to reduce those talks about Kusunoha Company and me.” (Makoto) “It is something to be proud about though.” (Eva)

“My heart is not ready.” (Makoto)

If I leave it be, it might become a conversation that will persist as the founding of Kaleneon.

I am counting on you to rewrite that. Please fabricate a truth like: ‘the fallen noble daughters, Eva and Ruria, stood up against adversities and caused a miracle’.

Chapter 215: Failure and Success

The snow country's hot spring plan –no wait, the big step to revitalize Kaleneon.

Just in case, I went around the hot springs of Lorel and learned about the special traits of the places where hot springs might come out of.

If I search for similar places in Kaleneon and dig a hole there, hot springs should come out.

An unexpected guest is also cooperating, so it is just a matter of time before it succeeds.

“Fuhahaha, it is truly cold! It tenses the body, right Waka-sama?”

He is laughing it off, so I don't know how cold he actually feels.

Special guest number 1, Neptune Serwhale-san was lively, even within the blizzard.

It seems like he has had experience in the north sea, so this cold should be nothing for him.

Is what I thought but...

“Impossible. This cold is simply impossible. I can't move anymore; I can't feel anything. I am dying~uuh~.”

In contrast to Serwhale-san that is practically naked, there's one girl that is wrapped up in layers of clothing and yet, is sitting down and trembling heavily.

This one here supposedly lived in quite the northern parts of this place though.

“Levi, you are exaggerating. In the first place, you guys live in the sea in winter, so the cold in the land shouldn't be such a big deal, right?”

(Makoto) If normal people were to jump into the sea in winter, their bodies wouldn't be able to stand it.

And she is living in a place like that, so her feeling cold in land looked strange to me.

“Waka-sama, excuse me for interjecting, but this place is quite cold. On top of that, the wind here is also strong. I think it would be harsh for most of the sea races.” (Serwhale) Serwhale-san does a follow-up for Levi.

Is that true?

I look at Levi once again, and as if denying my words completely, she nods her head up and down.

Eh?

“Is that so? I thought that if the sea race lives in the north, they would be fine with the cold. And when I said there would be somewhat strong mamonos, Levi-san, you were the one who said that you wanted to come.” (Makoto) When the talk about hot springs came out, I went to do a preview in Lorel, and after that, I returned to Asora where I coincidentally met up with the Neptunes and the other sea races who had come to the town, and from there, it ended up with the talk about hot springs.

At that time, Serwhale-san said that there’s a place where the temperature is increased because of things like the eruptions of submarine volcanoes, and so, they ended up accompanying me to Kaleneon.

He said that within the Neptunes, there’s people that ‘bath’ in the warmed waters.

Bathing when already inside water, I don’t understand that sensation.

It seemed like the battle-junky Scylla, Levi, was interested in the mamonos at the blizzard regions, so she came with us, but...Levi, who was the most vigorous one when we were leaving from Asora, was now the most weakened one. The reason being that it is cold.

“This is impossible~. Fighting in a place like this is suicidal. I want to go back. I seriously want to go home, Waka-sama~.” (Levi) She is a goner.

I return Levi, who was trembling inside her blanket, to Asora.

Hm, I have found an unexpected weak point.

“If I was lacking a bit more training, I might have turned out that way

too. If there's a fight in the northern lands, it might become fatal. I have earned a nice experience." (Serwhale) Serwhale-san doesn't seem like he wants to return.

Actually, he looks fine.

"Then, let's go." (Makoto)

Resuming our search for hot springs, I speak out.

But Serwhale-san looks at me and nods as if in admiration.

"...Ehm, is there something wrong?" (Makoto)

"No, I was just impressed. As expected of our master, is what I thought. Even in cold of this level, you are able to move like normal." (Serwhale)

"Serwhale-san as well, you are totally different from Levi." (Makoto) "Me? By nature, we people that live in the sea have the ability to adjust our temperature. But Waka-sama is different. Even though you should be unable to live underwater, you can act in water like normal, and in land, no matter if it is hot or cold, you are able to advance without caring about it. On top of that, if the opponent is in the sky, you are able to reach all the way up there. You are already unrivaled; able to accommodate to any terrain." (Serwhale) Land, sea, and air; I have already reached S class when dealing with those.

No wait, that's not it.

When talking about terrain adaptability, I feel like I am being treated as a human-shaped weapon.

"I am forcing myself by using magic after all." (Makoto)

"If it's Waka-sama, you would most likely be able to move freely in the starry sky sea as well. For us Neptunes, there's a legend that says that when you continue to train yourself, you will become a hero that can even adapt to the starry sky sea." (Serwhale) Serwhale-san retorted to me with a joking tone mixed in it.

Serwhale-san, what a scary person.

"Ahaha, but I was also surprised. To think that a race of the sea would

be weak against cold.” (Makoto) While climbing a mountain in Kaleneon which I have gone to for a decent amount of times, we do idle talk.

It is not a mountain of incredible height, but it is a volcano.

It resembles the underground space I saw in the Lorel hot springs with the magma and the arrangement of the water vein, so I think I can expect quite a bit from it.

“Fumu...It is not only in cold. The races that live in water are weak to the changes in temperature by foundation.” (Serwhale) “Is that so?” (Makoto)

“Even if we talk about the sea of winter, it is more normal that the water temperature is higher than that of the outside. Just like how people like to play in the sea and rivers at summer, the water is colder than the outside. The temperature change of the water is more stable, and the difference in high and lows is not that big.” (Serwhale) “...That’s true.” (Makoto)

Putting an example, Serwhale-san makes it easier to understand.

I feel like instead of going into a detailed explanation, he is putting it all together in a way that it can be understood as a whole.

“It is the same with the frozen river you saw just now. Below it, there’s water flowing. The surface is the part of the water that has touched the air and froze, but in the bottom part, the fish and living beings are still continuing with their lifestyle. Of course, it is warmer than the place we are walking in right now.” (Serwhale) “No matter if you live in the seas of the north, it doesn’t mean that you have adapted to the cold of the north’s land huh. You are saying that the temperature inside the water is easier to live in?” (Makoto) “Yes. There’s a thick cover of ice on the river; the mountains will be dyed in pure white, and the blizzard will not stop. In that kind of place, it is not an environment that people living underwater would be able to endure. And in reality, the sea races that are participating in the Asora ranking are all suffering by the fire and ice magic.” (Serwhale) Inside the water huh.

I have learned something new.

“Thanks for the lesson. I was thinking lightly of it, thinking that you

guys would be fine since you live inside the water. Ah, it should be around here. Serwhale-san, how is it?” (Makoto) “Being able to advance without getting lost within this field of vision, as expected of Waka-sama. Please wait for a bit. Hm, it is certainly true that I feel the slight presence of a bath from below here.” (Serwhale) It is a bit sad that for Neptunes, hot springs equal baths, but I was a bit happy knowing that there’s a race that knows of its existence.

It seems like the other sea races found it dangerous to get close to it, so there’s a lot of races that don’t know of submarine volcanoes and hot springs.

The races living at the shore were also in a similar situation.

The eldwas may have known of it, but it seems like they didn’t think of taking a bath in it.

Anyways, I have received the confirmation of Serwhale-san.

Now there’s only the digging left.

“Now then, let’s try digging. Ah, a guest.” (Makoto)

“Good grief. If Levi had endured for a bit more...no, looking at that state of hers, I don’t think she would have been able to move at all.” (Serwhale) Serwhale-san makes a bitter smile.

And then, he slowly takes his stance.

He points forward his trident that surpasses his height.

The numbers are three.

The hot spring challenge is waiting for me, so I don’t mind dealing with them myself.

But even if I say that, they are not enemies I have to bring out Azusa to deal with.

It seems like they are just simple mamonos living in this mountain.

It should be fine with Brid.

“Waka-sama, please leave it to me.” (Serwhale)

Maybe Serwhale-san noticed my movements, he told me not to act.

Well, this person doesn't seem like he would lose, so I can tell that it would be fine.

When I cancel my Brid, he thanked me.

Can't be helped. Let's just do the preparations for digging.

I am simply taking out the tools of the Elder Dwarfs though.

"If you are going to camouflage, do it in a harder to perceive way!"
(Serwhale) The white beast that was poking out its head from the snow and camouflaged in it, was turned to shreds.

Instead of camouflage, it felt like its body had melded with the snow, but...well, for him, something like this is a small deal.

Blue blood and pieces of meat are scattered around.

A headbutt huh.

Even though he has no horn on his head, that headbutt had impressive power.

There's nothing left of that mamono's original form.

Next, Serwhale-san thrusts his spear to the right.

He said that the field of vision was bad, and yet, he has a perfect grasp of his opponent's location.

The spear of Serwhale-san moved as if it was gravitating towards the bird-like mamono that had made a nosedive from the sky.

Being skewered from head to torso, the bird of notable size explodes from the inside and this one also didn't maintain its original form.

Truly simple and strong.

There's one who ignored him and plunged at me.

It is fast.

This way of moving, a snake?

"How pretentious!" (Serwhale)

But the movements of the snake stopped.

Ah, the place that seems to be its tail has been pierced by the spear.

And then, I think I heard something resembling a tremor, and...

At the side of the snake, there's a whale.

"Hah!!"

His fist pulverizes the head of the wriggling snake.

Serwhale-san, even if you left your spear behind, it would have still been fine.

"Splendid job." (Makoto)

"No, as expected, when it comes to land and on top of that being cold, my movements and senses get duller. I will try even harder in my training." (Serwhale) That's considered duller?

It was a total smashing though.

The mamonos around this area are supposed to be relatively strong, but it seems they were no enemies in the face of a Neptune.

"I see. Then I will be digging so I am counting on you to keep an eye o-ooout?!" (Makoto) A spiralling spear.

Well, only the pointed part of the spear is a drill though.

I used the spear that was given to me, set it properly right down, and the instant I pour magic power into it...it suddenly began spinning!

No well, I can understand that it spins, since I could tell that from its shape, but I thought it would only be the drill part that would be spinning!

Even the handle part was spinning, moreover, it is spinning with such speed that even I am spinning!!

"Waka-sama?!" (Serwhale)

"I am fiiineeee~~~ probably!" (Makoto)

I just have to let go of it.

I could understand that in my head, I could understand, but because of

the centrifugal force, it felt like I was being pulled from the outside, and my body reflexively gripped the handle harder.

I can't explain the reason for my reflexive movement.

For some reason, I was still holding it.

Also, as long as the drill part is not the only part that is spinning, I thought for a second that if we left it to brute force when trying to stop it, it might break.

“U-Uwaa!”

The drill that has wedged into the ground was scattering earth in a grand manner while increasing its speed and going deeper underground.

The voice of Serwhale-san is already far and I can't hear it.

I use the Magic Armor to block the earth and stones that were spouting forth as the spinning continues to increase in speed and digs underground at lightning speed.

Aside from my eyes spinning around, there's no real problem, but as expected, I can't just advance underground until the end of times.

I steel myself and release my hands from the handle.

The spear that was spinning for a while more, had stopped moving by the time I recovered my balance. It settled down, stuck into the ground.

It was an incredible attraction.

For now, I try checking upwards.

“I have dug pretty far~. If it doesn't work after digging so much, this place is a failure huh.” (Makoto) It had surpassed the planned profundity by a lot.

But when I confirmed with Sakai, I was supposed to have plunged onto the hot spring before reaching this depth though.

“Could it be, I missed the mark? It is possible. I didn't know what was happening in the middle of that, so it is possible that the trajectory shifted at some point in time.” (Makoto) Within the damp and humid

atmosphere, I imagine a lot of scenarios.

Of course, I was also determined in having them remodel this spear so it only spins at the tip.

“For now let’s get out of here. If I make some footholds, I should be able to jump out... Wait, humid atmosphere? Damp?” (Makoto) Ah.

As I was looking up, I suddenly realized.

That this place is actually the correct one, but me being here is pretty bad.

As if confirming me this, the place where I was looking up at, the left side of the earth wall swelled up in an unnatural manner.

Right after, it crumbled.

A massive amount of water –no, boiling water, ended up falling right down at me.

“That was dangerous. It looks like it has quite the high temperature. Seems like it would be hard to enter this water in its current state. Seriously, it is great that I have this Magic Armor.” (Makoto) The seething boiling water began to fill up the place.

I let my body be pushed by the boiling water, and I float along with it.

If I had been bathed in it with my flesh, I would have received burns, or more like, it would have been a matter of life and death. While feeling indebtedness to my own power, I felt relieved that the first step has been successful.

I jump out one step before the water, and land safely.

“...To think that...you would dig it out at your first try... I am filled in awe. So even in places like this, baths can come out. Welcome back, Waka-sama.” (Serwhale) “That’s not a bath, it is a hot spring. It seems it was a place with more hot water than I thought. It might be hard to make a path.” (Makoto) “If you are not in a hurry, you can let it accumulate over there. Since the stream is far away from the town, it should be fine to just leave it as it is. It doesn’t confluence with the rivers of the surroundings

after all.” (Serwhale) “I see. You have made a place to let it accumulate. Thank you.” (Makoto) When I check, I could see that there’s a bowl-shaped place below.

The hot water was beginning to flow into it.

“Waka-sama was digging, so I thought that it would be good to be ready for it just in case. Fortunately, it was a soft rocky area, so it only needed a few pokes.” (Serwhale) Did he use his fists, or maybe his head?

He spoke in a way that didn’t feel as if he used his spear, but it scared me to confirm it.

As I thought, Serwhale-san has no need for a spear.

It is quite a few distance away from the town, but I have obtained the hot spring.

The construction related work for this can be done later, so in the future, this can be dubbed as hot spring number 1 of Kaleneon.

And so now, about the town...

Within the blizzard that continues as always, I call the Mist Gate to teleport to the town while I thought of a way to melt the snow of the town with the warm water.



Outskirts of Kaleneon.

In the snow field that at a glance looks like there’s nothing, there’s Serwhale-san, a number of Eldwas, Eva, and me.

Ruria caught a cold huh.

How to say this, I lately have been having bad timings and have not been able to meet with Ruria that much.

Shiki and Mio have been talking quite a bit about her though.

This time there’s no real need to force her to come, so I just entrusted the medicine to Eva-san.

“Uhm, what did you say just now?”

“Like I said, I have obtained a prospect hot spring. The construction work can’t be done immediately, but for now I have dug it up, so there’s boiling water gushing out from the mountain.” (Makoto) “Uhm, you climbed a mountain that has nonstop blizzards and dug up a hole?”

“That’s right. Eva, you were the one who said it was fine to do whatever I wanted in that place since there’s no one living there yet and it is far from the town too, right?” (Makoto) “That’s true, but to go digging holes in a place where the mamonos have not been dealt with at all, and finish the job at that same day. That’s just...” (Eva) “The mamonos are not stupid, Eva-dono. Most of the fellows there understood their lack of ability and curled their tails. There were a few who attacked us, maybe because they were hungry or because they were stupid, but there were no problems.” (Serwhale) Serwhale-san responded to Eva.

The two of them have already introduced themselves.

Eva-san is already okay with whatever comes out from the Kuzunoha Company, so she simply accepted Serwhale-san with sunken eyes.

As expected, you would imagine whales to be bigger than this, right?

“That’s... Serwhale-san did it?” (Eva)

“It was something that even I was plenty enough to deal with.” (Serwhale) Serwhale-san nods and affirms it.

The dwarfs that were at the side seem to be in admiration as well.

“That’s impressive-ja. In that blizzard, the field of view is bad and the mamonos are in an advantage after all. From what I have heard, there’s a Snow Lion that melds in the snow and nullifies physical attacks; Icicle Flams that attack you with precision; and there’s also the Cyclop Serpent that swims in the snow without creating any sound. Those are dangerous mamonos that live in the mountains of this area. It seems like you were able to proceed without encountering them, but in the volcano that is filled with difficulties, that’s quite impressive.”

“If you encounter those for the first time, it just ends up in checkmate after all. But well, you are truly worthy of being at the side of Waka-sama.”

“I am grateful. It must be thanks to this spear that I have received from your comrades. It was a fortune that we didn’t encounter such terrifying enemies.” (Serwhale) ...I think we literally encountered those three.

This is just a supposition, but I think that those guys didn’t have worthy opponents, so they felt like they were the kings around these parts and attacked us who were in their territory.

I did catch their figures with Sakai and they fit the description.

Ah, so the one that was turned to minces first was the lion that attacked us in the demon race territory?

It is certainly true that at that time its body seemed to be made out of snow and it felt like it was nullifying the attacks of the weapons.

Even when it looked like it was defeated, it soon stood back up and attacked again after all.

In front of Serwhale-san, it was instant death huh.

I give out a prayer to the three kings(maybe) of that mountain.

The dwarfs and Serwhale-san were talking about topics of weapons and fighting, and were getting fired up.

“And so, I will try to draw the hot spring to the town by this winter. And in the meantime...” (Makoto) “Yes.”

“This place is a reservoir that has been frozen and can’t be used, right?” (Makoto) I point out at the snow field that is in front of me.

Eva nods.

“Since it is slightly distanced from the town, the maintenance has been delayed too. It is currently unavailable for us.” (Eva) “Then that’s perfect. For now, I will be melting it.” (Makoto)

I create a number of fireballs and throw them.

Obviously, the snow and ice melts and the snow field returned to being a pond.

Hmph~, its size is around this much huh.

It is appropriate to use as experiment.

“If Waka-sama were to come here everyday, the snow problem would be resolved though. If you were to come five to six times a day to melt the snow in the surroundings, it would be perfect.”

That would be harsh.

Wouldn't it take around 30 minutes each time?

“If not for Raidou-sensei, we would need several magicians and adventurers and it would take around half a day; something that you have accomplished in just a couple seconds. Fuh~.” (Eva) That last sigh was heartrending, Eva.

Now then, let's try the second step.

The hot spring digging went well, so I hope this one goes well too.

I take out one crimson ring from my pocket.

A scrapped Draupnir that is being managed by the Elder Dwarfs.

Lately, the amount of times it turns completely red in a day's time has increased so much that they have accumulated quite a bit.

It seems like Ema has thought of an incredible way to dispose of them, but if this matter goes as I want it to, I plan on utilizing it as one of the methods to dispose of them.

“That is...a Draupnir.”

The dwarf looks in surprise at the ring with his brows furrowed.

It would be a different case if it were white, but a red one is not something that one would normally walk around with.

Eva-san was watching over the situation with hard to understand feelings, and Serwhale-san was looking with interest.

I have the Draupnir in my hand float slightly upwards, and on top of that, I add my magic power into the stored up magic power inside of it to set it up.

I make it so that the ring itself has a simple magic constantly activated.

The outward appearance of the ring that looks as if it was made by the iron of smelting furnaces, was clad in a vivid red.

Yup yup.

With this, it probably can be used as a heat generating tool.

“Well then, just in case, prepare something to defend yourselves with. I think it will be fine though. I will cover Eva; Serwhale-san, I leave the dwarfs to you.” (Makoto) “...Understood.” (Serwhale)

For some reason, Serwhale-san makes a serious expression as he has the dwarfs step back and takes a formation where he is at the front of them.

I guard Eva-san by enclosing her in the arm of my Magic Armor.

Now then...

“Here I go~~~” (Makoto)

“?!!!”

The tension of Serwhale-san increases in an instant.

Why?

While thinking it was strange, I release the magma colored ring to the pond which I thought needed at least this much heat since it is in a place of constant cold.

?!

The ring that left my hand, for some reason, had increased in output by a lot and shone in an instant?!

The moment that ring touched the water surface, it made an incredible sound.

I don't know what was happening, but anyways, it was an incredible sound.

My vision had turned pure white, and I couldn't tell right from left.

This is strange.

I estimated the water to boil.

I even thought that maybe it would splash around as well.

But the result was clearly different from what I imagined.

“Just what is...” (Makoto)

After a while, silence returns to the surroundings.

Checking that Eva-san, the dwarfs, and Serwhale-san were okay, I slowly look at the pond.

Because of the vapour that coursed through the surroundings like a hot gale, the snow had completely melted and the light brown ground was exposed.

Speaking of the reservoir...the outer circumference had been shaved off in a pretty forceful manner, and the water inside was gone.

And the ground at that place was dyed in deep red.

It felt like lava.

Oh?

That ring, did I enhance it way too much?

Leaving aside the joking, did I go too far even when it was going to be used for winter?

I don't know the reason for the explosion, but because of it, the water was all blown up and the ring was fallen there.

It seems like it wasn't blown into pieces even when it exploded.

And so, the heat that it emitted has melted the ground huh.

I can tell that the ring is floating at the surface of the lava, but...

When taking into account the sudden change in state, it feels kind of unstable.

“ ... ”

I was worried about Eva who's the one with the lowest fighting power here, and I once again look at her.

As expected of the person that is in charge of a country, she is a firm

one.

Her mouth was a straight line, and her face didn't show surprise.

"It wasn't an experiment that was supposed to explode though~ Hahaha." (Makoto) "..."

I tried to laugh away this complicated atmosphere, but there was no reaction.

This is bad. Did I anger her?

"At any rate, what was that just now?" (Makoto)

"...It is a pretty natural occurrence when throwing a mass of high heated metal to a water surface, Waka-sama." (Serwhale) I was attacked by common sense again huh.

There was also the vegetable that emitted heat, that's just unreasonable.

Serwhale-san answers my question that wasn't directed at anyone in particular, with a slightly tense expression.

...So he was able to predict it would end this way, and that's why he was nervous huh.

"I-Is that so? So you were able to predict it." (Makoto)

"In the middle of it, it was controlled to a certain extent, so I thought it would be okay, but...it was good that I was mentally prepared for it." (Serwhale) So when it was in my hands, it was still in a state where it could go well?

Tentatively speaking, I wanted that ring to emit heat moderately until its magic power ran out, and change the water that flows in this pond into hot water.

And with the already existing waterways, it would provide warm water in this winter, but...it has ended in a splendid failure.

It actually created great damage by destroying one reservoir.

Let's fix this as we work on the hot spring project.

"Eva, I'm sorry. As you can see, it was a failure. I will find a way to fix it,

and I will ask about countermeasures for the cold and the snow, so...”
(Makoto) “...”

“...Eva?” (Makoto)

Her state is strange.

Or more like, her eyes have not moved for a while now.

“Excuse me.”

A dwarf approaches Eva and rudely pokes her face with the tip of his hammer.

Even if your height is lacking, doing that to a woman is just rude.

Eva would get angry as well.

But not only did she not get angry, she didn't show any sort of reaction.
Eh?

“It seems she lost consciousness from that explosion just now. It was an explosion that astonished even us, so it can't be helped.”

Let's do something about Kaleneon.

Bringing her all the way here and making her faint from an explosion, only to deteriorate the situation; that just makes me feel way too bad.

It would be good to ask Zef how to manage a northern land when I meet with him.

It seems like the demon race didn't develop Kaleneon properly, but they were at least able to maintain it as a fortress.

Looking at the fainted Eva who was looking straight to the front, I seriously thought of this.

Chapter 216: I heard from a whale

I was able to get the meeting with Zef at the night of this same day.

I apologized to Eva who had regained consciousness, and since I had the chance, I also visited Ruria.

Before heading back to Asora, I contacted Zef via Rona, and it turned into meeting him tonight.

What a flexible schedule this king has.

Since it was sudden and they have a variety of matters at hand, they couldn't throw a warm reception, but I don't wish for something like that in the first place.

I am the one who requested it, so I fully intended to go to their capital myself.

But they said something about the preparations of welcoming blah-blah-blah, and I felt like they dodged the topic when they refused. In the end, we are going to be meeting at the place where I met with Rona and Io the time when I went to visit the demon race territory.

Why is it. Even though I said that I would arrive at the promised time if they just wait. Maybe they didn't trust me?

Is that the reason why they went through the trouble of designating a meeting point that is close to our location?

Zef is the Demon Lord, and yet, the moment I asked him to make a moment where I can meet with him, not only did he say he would come meet me in person, it was even in the same day I asked him, which makes me think I am not being treated badly.

I think that way, but...

Oh well, worrying about it won't progress anything.

Anyways, if there's useful information for Kaleneon, I want to know, and it is also true that I want to try throwing him the question that I had in Limia.

“Waka, I heard of it!”

“Tomoe huh. I heard that you have been shut in with Shiki when you find the time. Just what are you doing?” (Makoto) Lately, I have only seen Tomoe in meal times, but she has now come to where I am.

Right now, I am in the Elder Dwarf workshop to tell them about the remodelling of the drill spear.

That she has come all the way here to talk to me must mean that the two have reached some sort of result, or maybe they have thought of something that is not concrete yet?

I don't want to think it is the case, but there's the chance that something bad has happened.

The chances of it being a good happening is...none.

“Oh, I have gratefully read the memories of the archives of Waterfall. Later, please give me a report...wait, right now that doesn't matter, Waka!” (Tomoe) “Yeah...” (Makoto)

It doesn't matter?

Even though you were browsing it pretty happily...

“That Serwhale said that Waka had gone to the snow mountains of Kaleneon and dug up a hot spring!” (Tomoe) “Y-Yeah, I did. It can be used as a countermeasure for the winter, and I thought that it can used as a selling point as well.” (Makoto) “Hot springs, taking a bath, restorative properties! HOT SPRINGS!” (Tomoe) <草津に箱根に熱海> “You are rebounding Tomoe.” (Makoto)

“I want to take my time and soak in it.” (Tomoe)

Tomoe suddenly falls into a tranquil tone.

But something was still welling up from her whole body.

“I understand how you feel. But first we have to confirm the components of it to see if it is a hot spring that we can enter just like that, and that's after we finish the construction work of it. Well, I think we can manage something by spring. When it is currently in its source, it has too high of a

temperature to bathe in, so there's the need to dilute it as well. In that case, it might be easier to draw the water all the way to the river. At any rate, it is impossible to use it currently." (Makoto) "If it's fresh water, it is fine if it's warm. It is not on the point of boiling. I can manage." (Tomoe) "Won't do. Also, even if we make a hot spring like that in a hurry, the only ones who would be able to use it are people like you." (Makoto) "Uh~, is that a no?" (Tomoe)

"I'm telling you to wait. If you want one that much, why don't you go find one in the volcanoes of Asora. If you do that, it would be easy to gather the people and work on it." (Makoto) "...I have already searched the volcanoes, but I just can't find a good one, Waka. When I open a hole in a place that looks like it might work, the most that comes out is ores." (Tomoe) To think that she has already tried looking for one.

As expected of Tomoe.

It is impressive that she already had a grasp of the existence of hot springs, but that she went into action is also impressive.

But is it that difficult?

I did it on the first try though.

Maybe there's no hot springs in Asora?

Just in case, I should try asking the surroundings.

Serwhale-san and the Neptunes seem to know of the real deal, so there might be something similar to it in the bottom of the ocean.

If we find one, we can just remove the water from the surroundings and create a hot spring-like place at the bottom of the ocean.

...The problem is if Tomoe can accept that though.

I can also try asking the bears and the wolves to see what they have to say.

Can't throw the possibility that one has already come out.

In my original world, there were animals like deers and monkeys entering the hot springs after all.

“You wanted to enter a hot spring so much that you came all the way here?” (Makoto) “Please! And then, I will bring a warmed sake and gaze at the snow as I drink! That kind of first experience in a hot spring would be extreme bliss for me! Knowing that Kaleneon is currently covered in snow, and there’s already a hot spring on top of that, I...I am already...!!” (Tomoe) Tomoe writhes as if suffering from withdrawal symptoms.

Lately, Tomoe has been in a serious and languid mood, but...Tomoe is still Tomoe huh.

These days she has been hooked on Certain kill monk, so it must have made her have even more interested in hot springs. <必殺鍼灸医の坊さん.> In those times when I read all that stuff about the healing properties of hot springs, I was the same. Looking at Tomoe, I am beginning to crave entering one as well.

Postponing the plan of putting the hot spring to practical use, we should first investigate if it has the components of a hot spring and learn if it’s okay to bathe in it. If that’s the case, let’s make a bathtub for it.

“Well then Tomoe, go check if the properties of the hot spring are ideal. If it can be used, gather the people that can be mobilized and create a bathtub of stones or something to begin with. However! The people that participate in it will have to participate in the public works related to the hot springs of Kaleneon as well, no questions asked. Also, make sure not to force yourself.” (Makoto) “!! Of course! We have been in a stalemate on our side, so this is a convenient happening!” (Tomoe) “...Is that related to what you said a moment ago about a report?” (Makoto) “Yes. I spoke with Shiki as well, but it has reached a point where we will need the permission and cooperation of Waka in order to proceed. Well then, wait for me, hot springs!” (Tomoe) Just like how Tomoe entered, she ran towards the door.

She is boisterous, but when Tomoe has those eyes, she is reliable, so it helps me out a lot.

But that report related thing seems to be troublesome enough to leave for later huh...

“Oh, Waka.” (Tomoe)

Is what I was thinking when Tomoe places a hand on the doorknob and turned to look back.

“What?” (Makoto)

“Is this Waka’s permission, order, or request?” (Tomoe)

“...Well, I don’t intend to push you guys, so a request.” (Makoto) “It’s been awhile since we have received a request from Waka. The goal is: finish in two days-ja!” (Tomoe) This time Tomoe actually left.

When she said the goal is two days, did she mean making the hot spring?

That’s not it, right?

Because I asked her to check it out just now, and it is not like Asora has so much free time.

The first town that is close to my house is still continuing its construction, and the port town is still in the middle of soil preparation.

That mountain has bad visibility as well, so the work will be rough.

She probably really said that with the intentions of finishing in two days.

“Waka-sama! I have heard of it!!”

What’s this feeling of deja vu?

There’s a slight difference in the voice and words, but it is practically a replay of just now.

“Ema?” (Makoto)

This is again an unexpected one.

When I meet with her, it is mostly in moments when we have already planned beforehand.

From my part, I normally just go talk to her when I find the time to, but when she comes to me, she properly makes an appointment first.

It is extremely rare of her to come rushing so suddenly in this manner.

Moreover, all the way to the workshop of the dwarfs.

...Is it an incident this time around?

“Ema, what’s wrong?” (Makoto)

“I heard from Serwhale-san!” (Ema)

...Even Ema with the hot springs?

Hot springs are super popular huh.

There should be one in Asora somewhere, so maybe I should try searching seriously for one?

“About the hot springs? If it’s about that, I have already given permission to Tomoe, so you can just cooperate with her and...” (Makoto)

“I heard you used a Draupnir?!” (Ema)

“Eh? Dra...?” (Makoto)

Upnir?

Ah, I was mistaken, it wasn’t about the hot springs.

“I heard that you threw it into a reservoir.” (Ema)

Ema has a serious face.

It seems it was the wrong topic.

“Ah, about that. It is true that I did throw it. It splendidly blew up and it was a big failure. I messed up that one.” (Makoto) “I heard you tried to use that ring to heat the water of the pond?” (Ema) “Yeah. I tried it thinking that it could be used to automatically heat things up in the winter.” (Makoto) To think that it would turn out that way.

The pond was gone and maybe because of the waves of the explosion, a mass of hot gale collided onto us.

Thanks to that, the snow on the surroundings melted and the ground was a mess.

When that freezes over, it will be a problem again. I truly did something bad.

“I reported it before, but me and a number of others have been thinking

about a way to utilize the scrapped Draupnirs that have Waka-sama's magic power stored. But the utilization of the ring is hard and just trying to dispose of them is a chore, and there's also danger to it." (Ema) Right right, I remember now.

Ema was thinking of a method to utilize them aside from simply disposing of them.

If there's a mistake in the disposal process, there's times when it might turn dangerous, so the disposal of Draupnirs is difficult.

From what she has thought, it seems like she plans on using them for things like the town's lighting, to power the workshops, and to maintain the barriers in the several points.

"I should have asked for confirmation before using it. I tested it with one just in case and it didn't go out of control, so I got overconfident. I should have tested it not only in my hand, but by throwing it inside of water as well." (Makoto) "We are talking of Waka-sama, so I don't think you were hurt, but I did get slightly worried there. The Draupnirs are troublesome rings that are incredibly hard to deal with. Please be careful." (Ema) "As I thought, even the way of dealing with it is special. It is certainly true that it was strangely unstable." (Makoto) "It goes well until the point of giving it a function. The problem is that when it surpasses a certain point in power, the moment it leaves the hand of the person doing the process..." (Ema) "It goes out of control in an instant." (Makoto)

Seriously, what a ring, even if I do say so myself.

"If it's on the level of having it in hand and utilizing when it is still there, it's incredibly useful. But once it reaches the dangerous point, the element and function it is given is transformed into output power in an instant, and just like that, after repeating the process of increasing its own power, it surpasses the limit it can take and explodes." (Ema) H-How picky.

I see.

When I made it a heating tool, the moment it left my hand, it turned unstable and increased in power instantly.

It feels like a baby that begins to cry the moment it leaves your arms.

Hm?

Hm hm?

Something is bothering me here.

“Wait Ema, wait for a moment please. When I did it, the ring didn’t break, you know?” (Makoto) Right.

“That’s it! That’s why I rushed all the way here!” (Ema) Ah, so that’s the reason of the strange action of Ema.

What I did was bad, but it was also an irregular result.

“Please tell me about that moment in detail!” (Ema)

“Is it okay if I am present for this as well, Waka-sama?”

“Elder-san?” (Makoto)

“Currently, we have been cooperating with Ema-dono and finally found one way to utilize the ring of Waka-sama. But if we can hear in detail about what Waka-sama has experienced, we might be able to find a future for the utilization of it. Well, it is simply the instinct of an old craftsman though.” (Elder) “...By the way, what is this use you found?” (Makoto)

“It would be best to demonstrate it. Hey.” (Elder)

Taking the opportunity when Ema makes her request, the Elder joins the conversation.

It is in the matter of the uses for my rings, so I was interested in what they have accomplished and when I asked the Elder, he called someone at the deep parts of the workshop.

The voice of the Elder wasn’t that high, and yet, a response with good energy soon came.

Then, one dwarf showed up.

When he notices me and Ema, he lowers his head deeply.

“Bring that.” (Elder)

“Understood!”

The dwarf who went inside again, returned to where we were with some sort of package.

“Show it.” (Elder)

“Yes!”

He takes the cloth off the package, and what came out of it was a spear.

But even if I say spear, it is not the drill spear.

It is a strange spear.

The bladed part looks like the lances that are used in horseback, a cone-shaped one.

Even so, the handle is long.

The lower part of the cone is shaped like a bowl, and as if protecting it, there's transparent crystal-looking spherical part attached to it, and from there, the handle is adhered to it.

The edge is thin, and if it were a normal spear, it would be like the throwing type, a javelin, but...what is this?

“I have named it Bakusou. I plan on distributing it to the Winged-kin.”
(Elder) <爆槍. If there's a suitable name in english, let me know.>

“Bakusou...” (Makoto)

“I think you can see the transparent spherical part.” (Elder) “Yeah.”
(Makoto)

“There, we will set the Draupnir that was planned to be disposed.”
(Elder) “I see.”

“And after that, you simply throw it. When the lance part detects impact of a certain degree, the ring will activate and create an explosion.”

So that's why it is called Bakusou.

I see, if it is for the use of weapons, explosions are welcomed.

It is also the most simple of directions.

I think that reaching the level of practical use was quite difficult though.

“When Waka-sama said that you used the rings to increase the power of Brid, this is something that was worked on by the dwarfs as an armament to put this principle into use.” (Ema) Ema gives a supplemental explanation.

It is certainly true that I combined it with Brid and increased its destructive power.

It is difficult to use as a weapon, but if we use it by throwing the unstable ring, it is pretty simple to understand.

“If there’s no battle, it can’t be used, but in a battlefield, one attack can dispose of one ring.” (Ema) We were planning on disposing them from the beginning, so it is fine to just use it with the intentions of throwing it away as well.

It kinda sounds...reasonable.

If Ema says it this way, it must mean that from the beginning, she saw worth in them and was thinking about a way to utilize them.

“But...” (Ema)

Ema continues.

“The Draupnir that Waka-sama threw into the pond seems to be stable even within the lava. I want to see the real thing in person. If a method to restrain the ring from going out of control is born with the information of the circumstances and what Waka-sama did...” (Ema) “It would be possible to utilize it for the livelihood that we were originally planning to use it for. If that happens, the Draupnir will turn from a troublesome article into an incredible resource. It would be a dream come true.” (Elder) And then, progress will be made for the tool that will be able to deal with them.

I am the main culprit for the production of these rings, so this is quite the pleasant talk.

There’s no way I won’t cooperate.

“It would be nice if I am of help though...” (Makoto)

Saying so, I spoke to the two about my big failure in a truly detailed manner.

Chapter 217: A clandestine meeting with just the two

Below the starry sky that had the strong presence of the moon and the stars, Zef and I had met alone.

‘Let’s meet with just the two of us’, was the proposition of Zef.

Thinking about the contents of what I wanted to ask this time, I felt like there was no problem, so I accepted the proposal.

“How many years has it been since this one has been alone with an outsider –no, how many decades has it been? It feels like this one has returned to my long past self, how nostalgic, and also fresh. What a mysterious feeling.” (Zef)

“I would have been fine with going to the capital though.” (Makoto)

“Sorry about that. When inviting someone to our place, there’s a lot of matters involved. Raidou-dono is an important guest of ours, and you are also a benefactor of ours. There’s no way we wouldn’t meet you. It took us to our limit just rearranging so this one could meet you as soon as possible.” (Zef)

Zef laughs with his usual smile that I can’t see through.

But his atmosphere is slightly different from when I met him because of the matters of the demon race.

We are outside after all.

“...And so, you had something to ask of this one, right? What do you want to hear? The secret weapon of the demon race? Or maybe, the time of our next invasion? Is it an objective like that?” (Zef)

“I have no interest in things like that. Please don’t make fun of me.”
(Makoto)

Seriously.

In the first place, there’s no way there’s a person who would ask the

Demon Lord himself about that.

Saying such a joke with a face as obvious as that, seriously, what a troublesome person.

“Hahaha! No interest huh. If you were to obtain a bit of information, you would be able to use it for trades you know, being a merchant and all. There should be a good amount of people that would believe it if it were to come out from the mouth of Raidou-dono, right? It is not like the hyumans are filled with only idiots after all.” (Zef)

“Please spare me already. I am not going to undertake complicated business like selling information.” (Makoto)

“So you won’t ride on it huh. What a shame. This one was going to mix truth and lies to throw them off though.” (Zef)

Zef laughs with a ‘Kukuku’.

Please don’t use me to sell your poisonous apples...

“If I were to do that, I would totally turn into the enemy of hyumans. It is not like I am in the side of the hyumans, but I am not in the side of the demon race either. Neither me nor the Kuzunoha Company.” (Makoto)

“This one knows. This one was just trying to see if you would yield a bit to our side, that’s all. Forgive me. By the way Raidou-dono, how’s Sari?” (Zef)

“Fuh~, Sari huh. Well, it seems like she is getting somewhat used to it now.” (Makoto)

“Hoh, so you are already in a relationship where you call her without honorifics. This one’s relieved... Have you done it?” (Zef)

“What do you mean by ‘done’?” (Makoto)

“Umu, is she pregnant already?” (Zef)

“Buh!” (Makoto)

“What’s wrong?” (Zef)

“What are you saying? You are the father of Sari, right?!” (Makoto)

“Yeah, and Raidou-dono is the master of Sari. This one thinks it is a natural question.” (Zef)

The face of Zef was frankly saying ‘what are you getting all flustered about?’.

Why is it that when it comes to slaves, there’s so many people that think in that way?

There’s also slaves that simply work.

“She is not pregnant. There’s no reason for her to be in the first place.” (Makoto)

“This one didn’t think she was a girl that would be against it just because it is her first time though.” (Zef)

“I’m saying this just in case but, I haven’t sought for her.” (Makoto)

“What? Raidou-dono, as a young man, holding back your sexual desires won’t bring anything good, you know?” (Zef)

“That’s truly not your business.” (Makoto)

Why does the Demon Lord have to worry about that?

Moreover, the person he is telling me to put my hands on is his very daughter.

What a troublesome king.

“Even though this one was secretly expecting a grandchild around summer. Wouldn’t it just end up as this one jumping to conclusions?” (Zef)

“That’s the case.” (Makoto)

Zef looks as if he is really disappointed about it.

If he is just acting, then that sad sigh is in an incredible level.

“Anyways, Sari is doing fine.” (Makoto)

“Understood. Then...” (Zef)

“I have not placed a single hand on her, and I haven’t kissed her either!”

(Makoto)

“No, I was just going to ask you what business you had today. Also, if she presses you, at least grant her a kiss.” (Zef)

“...Ah, geez.” (Makoto)

Why is it that I feel his face on the latter half had become even more serious.

“You went through the trouble of making an appointment with a Lord, so a part of me is looking forward to what kind of conversation you had in mind.” (Zef)

“Well then, there’s two things I want to ask you. The first is related to Kaleneon, and the other, how to say it...let’s just say it is related to the demon race.” (Makoto)

“It seems like it would be best to begin with the talk about Kaleneon.” (Zef)

“Right now, the town creation is progressing in the aforementioned land.” (Makoto)

“Umu.” (Zef)

“But the current state is that the people are not used to the climate and it is not progressing as expected. And so, I have come to ask of a demon that has survived through the harsh cold about the management of the land, development of it, and about the maintenance.” (Makoto)

“I see. But, Kaleneon huh. It is a land that has half-baked cold and snow if I remember correctly. I don’t think it would serve as much of a reference you know.” (Zef)

“But even in an ice field like this, the demon race was able to build a metropolis like that. Won’t you guys have some sort of knowledge about it? I am fine with only a bit, can you tell me about a solution?” (Makoto)

“Fufufu. Raidou-dono, even if we were to tell you the method itself and learn of the result it has brought, it doesn’t mean that you would be able to apply it in a sufficient manner. If you don’t know of its roots as well,

you will end up in a dead end.” (Zef)

“I see...” (Makoto)

I want to do something about the strong blizzards that will be coming in the near future, so even if we can't put it to practical use, it is fine for now.

“From what I know, Kaleneon is in a region we don't have much experience in managing either. If it were in a harsher environment, we would cover it with a dome-shaped barrier, and would live in a lifestyle centered on hunting. But just as I said, that place is half-baked. The difference between summer and winter is so extreme that it actually makes it hard for us to live in.” (Zef)

It is certainly true that in Kaleneon, in the place where the town is located, the snow is gone by the time it is summer.

It is true that it is half-baked, but even so, as long as there's land where cultivation is possible, I feel like there would be significance for the demon race in having people live in it.

If it were Limia, there would be a lot of land to talk about; why is it that they are expressly staying in a harsh land?

Also...

“In Kaleneon there was a fortress of the demon race and an army. Then wouldn't you also know about the way they lived?” (Makoto)

“If it's only on the level of gathering and hunting, yeah. If you are in need of that information, I will present it to you. But if you have taken a look around, I think you should already know; in Kaleneon, aside from the fortress, there were no proper towns, right? Also, in terms of inhabitants and common people, the numbers should have been quite low.” (Zef)

“Yeah. I heard that there were mostly people related to the army. Also, there was nothing resembling a town, and what was given maintenance was mostly the main road.” (Makoto)

“That's right. This one felt like the Kaleneon fortress would one day be necessary as a relay location, so this one had people stationed there, but

this one didn't have any intentions of having a settlement in the impending future. It was mostly goods and troops using it as a teleportation spot to mobilize. It is sad that it can't be used again though.” (Zef)

Uh.

I am the one who seized the place, so I know that I am not in a standing where I can complain.

I feel like he had gotten me there.

...Just like how Zef said, the only place that seemed to be useable as a town in Kaleneon was the fortress.

There were a number of remains from villages and towns, but they were all from humans. They were destroyed pretty thoroughly, and it didn't feel like it could be used in that state.

And the remains of the fortress are being used as the capital city of Kaleneon because of our own circumstances regarding the climate of Asora, so it is in the middle of being remade as a town.

The reason why the demon race was not treating Kaleneon as a country was probably because of what Zef said.

“...I see. So that place didn't have enough appeal to go through the trouble of creating a dome barrier.” (Makoto)

I have seen it in the demon race towns. Those things require quite the amount of magic power.

It is not realistic to do it in Kaleneon as well.

If I don't find some sort of closing countermeasure for the people living in that town, there's no point.

“Sadly to say, that's exactly right. With its location and climate, we didn't find the worth of fighting again to reclaim it. The snow is a troublesome thing you see. If ignored, it will bury the paths, and crush the houses. Even so, just going by the simple method of melting it with heat will instead freeze it and become a new hindrance. If we are to go through the trouble

of doing such maintenance, there's the need of a merit that's equally worth its demerits." (Zef)

"Understood." (Makoto)

"The decision this one arrived to was to leave a few facilities there and leave it is it is." (Zef)

"I see. Just in case, can I receive the information about the gathering and hunting?" (Makoto)

"Okay. It is already unneeded for us after all. Right, it would make this one happy if you were to put some flavor and hasten the time you commence the peddling in our towns." (Zef)

"I will arrange for that." (Makoto)

I don't think there will be a problem in hastening the process.

To begin with, I have already hastened the preparations, so there's no need for me to arrange anything anyways.

No, that's not it.

They are already in a haste, so I simply don't need to worry about it.

"Then let's hear the other thing you had to talk about. It seems like that's your real motive after all." (Zef)

"..."

"You had the time for it. You should already have the contents of your topic arranged, right?" (Zef)

"...Let me ask your Majesty. If the reason for the demon race to fight the humans disappears, will the demon race stop doing war?" (Makoto)

"..."

"Can I have an answer?" (Makoto)

"...Of course, we would stop it. But Raidou-dono, that question is boundlessly pointless." (Zef)

Zef who had broken the silence, let out a voice that was low and heavy.

He affirmed my question, but he also said it was pointless.

“What do you mean?” (Makoto)

“It is certainly true that if the reason the demon race does war against the humans disappears, the war will be stopped. But for that reason to disappear, it would also mean that the battle between humans and demons has reached some sort of conclusion. That’s why this one said it is pointless.” (Zef)

The reason disappearing...is equal to reaching a conclusion?

The demon race is oppressed by the Goddess and is being oppressed by the humans too, and because of that, they were driven to the poor lands of the north.

The rebellion that came from that should be because the demon race wanted to topple over the situation the Goddess had driven them into.

In that case, if the demon race obtains a wealthy land, the reason of the war should disappear.

Isn’t that right?

For example; a place in Kaleneon that has been improved, the demon race territory that is progressing with the domestic affairs, and also... maybe Asora.

It is not because I want to do this for the sake of the Goddess, but if those kind of things can stop the war, cooperating would be okay.

Honestly speaking, the current Hibiki is dangerous.

If the war continues, I think Senpai will probably lose her life at some point in time.

Then, I thought that it would be fine to give a part of Asora to the demon race.

Also, the moment the demon race enters Asora, they would have to agree and be involved with us no matter what.

Putting it badly, we can isolate them.

“I heard that the demon race began the war because they sought for a wealthy land. A rebellion because of the position they were in. Then, couldn't it be said that the demon race has obtained a land with plenty enough wealth? In the current state, I think you can have a truce with the humans. The demon race has been able to proceed the war in an advantageous position after all.” (Makoto)

If needed, I can help in encouraging them to accept it.

The negotiation will be hard with the heroes of Limia and Gritonia fighting in the frontlines, but if it's with the good-for-nothing country Aion that only has spies and Lorel Union which is an eccentric country that accepts Wise, I feel like the negotiations might be possible.

If there's a country that nods even if a bit, I think there can be ways to tackle the situation.

“Regarding the land, it is just as Raidou-dono says. We were able to obtain a wealthy land. But...the Goddess and the humans still have power left. If we were to enter negotiations in the current state, it would be like asking them to gather up their strength and counterattack.” (Zef)

“Even so, the demon race has plenty enough power, right?” (Makoto)

“If you are saying that by looking at the current progress of the war, that's a big mistake, Raidou-dono. Listen well, even if you stand in an advantageous position in tactics and technique at the beginning, even if not all, a part of it will flow into the opponent as the battle progresses. Right now when they are obtaining proper divine protection from the Goddess, the humans who surpass us in numbers will absorb the advantage. Our positions would take a reversal.” (Zef)

“No way.” (Makoto)

“The power of a God and the overwhelming difference in numbers; those two are not components that are as light as Raidou-dono thinks. Our current situation can be said to be its summit. Restraining the power of the Goddess and seeing through them to a certain limit, we do war with the humans. Doing this in the same way as we have until now is just...” (Zef)

The latter half of his words were as if he were squeezing them out. Zef's eyes were giving off a sad light.

"You are saying that's why you won't stop the war?" (Makoto)

"We thought about killing our hateful sibling while the parent wasn't present, but in the end, we didn't make it in time, and the parent came out." (Zef)

"..."

"That's why we have no choice but to be cautious about the eyes of the parent as we have a moderated sibling fight. Now then, Raidou-dono, what do you think we should do in order to somehow kill that sibling?" (Zef)

"Ehm...In the first place, should you kill each other in a sibling fight? I just can't imagine it." (Makoto)

"That's right. It is a sibling fight where the siblings hate each other to the point of killing. By the way, the parent is the ally of the other side." (Zef)

"Sorry, I can't bring myself to imagine it." (Makoto)

"I see. Even if we were to kill the other side in an ingenious manner, that's a death that the parent didn't wish for; and even if we both were to shake hands with fake smiles plastered on our faces, the hatred between those two siblings won't disappear. Well, in the end, no matter how many reasons we look for to do war, the main point would be that, is what this one thinks. And in reality, it has become a big reason of why us demon race continue to do war. The reason regarding the environment was simply the last push, but the thoughts in the depths of our hearts probably hasn't changed at all since the beginning." (Zef)

The Goddess is the parent, and the humans and demons are the siblings.

"Hate huh. As I thought, the Goddess is the root of it all." (Makoto)

"That's true, but no matter what the Goddess does this late in the game, the gap that has formed between the humans and the demons won't

disappear. For the demons, and for the humans as well; and of course, this one who told Raidou-dono about the disadvantages of the truce, is the same as well. Because this one thinks that that gap can only be filled with the blood of our opponents.” (Zef)

“...Are you saying you haven’t killed enough?” (Makoto)

“That’s right. Of course, there’s also the transition of the war’s state just like this one explained, but stating it in an extreme manner, that’s simply a front. We have already pushed aside the restraints of our parent the Goddess and swung our fists, so until we have spat out all our hate and flooded the ground with the blood of the humans, the demon race won’t stop.” (Zef)

...

“As a ruler, the thought of Raidou-dono can be considered as one choice. There’s probably rulers who would choose it. If it’s a kind ruler, they would definitely. But there’s also rulers that won’t choose that...rulers who can’t choose to do that. Just like this one...this one’s current self...if many of my people wish for it, this one won’t stop the war.” (Zef)

“...What do you think...I was thinking?” (Makoto)

Even though it was calm, the light inside the eyes of Zef felt like they could see through me.

There’s no way he would be able to know.

Because no one knows about the existence of Asora.

“Raidou-dono can prepare a new land for us demons, right? Maybe in the extremities of the wasteland, or it might be a place we don’t know of that is located somewhere at the other side of the north or west sea. This one doesn’t know that far, but you plan on having the demon race migrate from this continent, and you were wondering if it can end the war in this way, isn’t that what you were thinking?” (Zef)

“ ... ”

You gotta be kidding, right?

Even to the point of readying a land, how?

I did think he would be able to guess till the point of helping out in the negotiations of the truce, but...

“Bull’s-eye huh. How scary. The Raidou-dono that said he didn’t have any interest in the war, seemed to have investigated about the reason of the war in detail after all, so this one just intended to probe a bit. Good grief, the eyes of Sari are impressive. A self-sufficient company huh. I see. If it’s only that, it can’t be called a country just yet, but...it can be said that it is already an organization that has surpassed the boundary of a company.” (Zef)

A self-sufficient company?

No, right now the important point is why he can’t accept the migration.

“...Why...wouldn’t you choose that?” (Makoto)

“Just as you said before, hate. Even if we were to receive that proposal, only a few would accept. Ah, there’s no doubt that the bunch who were involved in that incident will be mixed in the group. If Raidou-dono wants to propose it no matter what, this one can notify the people. Having our people chipped off will result in a pretty big disadvantage in the war, but when this one thinks of turning Kuzunoha Company into our enemy, this is for the best.” (Zef)

That incident...the one where Root did a mess?

In that case, he must be talking about the people that wholeheartedly believe in the Goddess even in that environment and situation.

That’s honestly rough.

Frankly speaking, I feel like their train of thoughts is different in a fundamental level.

“The believers of the Goddess, is it. How to say it, they are people with quite the assertion for peace huh. The type of people that think the opponent won’t attack as long as they hold their hands up high in surrender. It was also strange that they were so zealously trying to make

the demon race –they are a part of– into the bad guys.” (Makoto)

“If the humans were like that, it would be easier to win though. Even this one doesn’t understand how their brain works. Do they even know what would happen if we were to declare ourselves as slaves to the humans that have been treating the demi-humans as a lower class for thousands of years and consider it common sense?” (Zef)

Ah, in that part, I am completely of the same opinion.

“Right. Well, regarding the land, it is not all advantages, so if it handicaps the demon race because of it, please just forget about it. I didn’t have those intentions.” (Makoto)

“Hahaha, that scare about them being mixed in there was just a joke. Of course, there are people within the demon race that are purely against the war. It is true that they are low in numbers, but it is people that have been tired out by this air of war that has lasted for decades. People that have grown tired of fighting, people that have grown tired of losing any more, people that have grown tired of taking away lives...many types of people.” (Zef)

“I see.” (Makoto)

Well, there’s obviously people like that.

It is certainly true that being within a group where the majority agree to the war, it would just be suffocating for people like that.

“Not believers of the Goddess, simply tired of the war and wishing for peace. This one doesn’t want to just cast them away. If it won’t be a source of evil in the system of the demon race, this one doesn’t mind having them saved at this one’s discretion. Currently, there are around 10 or so people that have a decent amount of authority, how about it?” (Zef)

“Even if you ask me that...what do you mean by having authority?” (Makoto)

“Giving the demon race land. In other words, Sari has been of decent help, so this time, you want to directly take in people to the company; that’s the real motive of Raidou-dono, right? Something like that, even this

one is able to guess it. There's no need to hide it. This one is genuinely happy about having the abilities of my race approved. The part about authority, it refers to the people that this one has to deal with in a near future. Well, it simply means that if you are thinking about saving them, it is best to hurry." (Zef)

...

A few moments ago I thought he was incredibly keen, but now he has gone and done a wild pitch.

I am not really looking for the demon race's techniques and knowledge, you know?

I did understand the point about authority though.

'Their voices are big and conspicuous, so they have to be dealt with', is probably what he meant. People that in the surface are obedient, but hold opposing feelings. If it is people that don't have the ability to oppose the methods of the Demon Lord, there's no need to hurry and deal with them, is what I think he means.

"No. I wouldn't mind having more hands to work with, but...I simply thought that if this was enough to end the war, it wouldn't be so bad."
(Makoto)

"...Half of it was just a front, right?" (Zef)

"Uhm, those were my whole real intentions." (Makoto)

"..."

"Your Majesty?" (Makoto)

Zef turned silent.

"...You got me there. It seems like Raidou-dono has a thought pattern that this one can't grasp. This one is ashamed. Placing everything under the basis of advantages and disadvantages as well as calculations, might be considered the influence of these times." (Zef)

It felt like he was having a monologue. He muttered in a weak and grazed voice.

“Ahahaha, I am often told that I do things in ways that lack common sense. Especially lately.” (Makoto)

“There’s no need to be ashamed of lacking common sense. We are basically fighting the humans because of that. But this one understands now. Then, if that’s the case...won’t you please take those guys in?” (Zef)

“The 10 or so demons?” (Makoto)

If it’s only around that much, I don’t really mind. Moreover, if they are not believers of the Goddess and are simply tired of war, I feel like it is okay.

“Umu. From this one’s point of view, it is like this one is having you take care of the trouble for me, so it hurts a bit to ask you of this though. If the precedent of Raidou-dono and Sari didn’t exist, it wouldn’t have been a choice to begin with after all. If there’s work over there, you can have them work as colleagues of Sari, or if you want, you can have them in house arrest or confine them, this one doesn’t mind. If you wish to, this one can also limit it to only women.” (Zef)

“Please stop taking all subjects to that tangent.” (Makoto)

“So as long as they can work, the gender doesn’t matter huh. This was a verbal slip then.” (Zef)

“Regarding that matter, I will go back and discuss about it. Just that... even if I am to accept them all, I will have them go through the same contract as Sari.” (Makoto)

I obviously don’t think that because they are demons I can trust them.

“They are technically being exiled, so this one doesn’t mind. If they stay within the demons, their future would be even worse after all. But to go through that contract, we will require a part of Raidou-dono’s body. Is it okay if we are to receive cooperation in that?” (Zef)

“...The master won’t be me. If it is demons, I will have Sari take care of them, so it is fine if she is the master. Of course, it still hasn’t been decided yet.” (Makoto)

“...Raidou-dono, you are truly someone this one can't grasp the depth of.” (Zef)

“Reading too deeply into things, reading my mind, and while at it, using the Kuzunoha Company to deal with troublesome people; I think that the depth of your Majesty is the one that is hard to grasp. Seriously.”
(Makoto)

“...In the first place, Raidou-dono and this one can't be compared. My depth is limited after all.” (Zef)

“Eh?”

“No, nothing. This one is expecting a good response. But to act as a Lord with someone that is leagues higher and whimsical, my nerves can't take it, seriously.” (Zef)

“Your Majesty?” (Makoto)

The only thing I could hear was ‘No, nothing’, but it seems like Zef found something funny and was laughing.

“Then Raidou-dono, this one will be waiting for your call in a near future. It is okay to call whenever you feel like it.” (Zef)

“Ah, yes. Thanks for going through the trouble of coming all the way here.” (Makoto)

“Please give my regards to Sari.” (Zef)

Zef was enveloped in a sphere he created with magic, and just like that, he floated up and flew away.

When I checked the surroundings, I could see that there's a large mamono in standby not too far from here, so he will probably be flying until that point.

From there, he will mount the mamono and move to where the teleport formation is, and in that way, he will return.

Even so, Asora wasn't exposed, but the offer of land was exposed huh.

Are rulers the kind of people that can tell those kind of things?

I didn't feel that way in Limia, so maybe it doesn't apply to all.

I don't know what it is, but I feel like Zef is different.

"A war where they kill and are killed is not going to end that easily. Senpai said this as well, but Zef thinks in the same manner huh. If one were to endure or forget about it without killing, the chain of hatred would end. Migrating and ending the war in that way; a part of me probably wanted that to happen. Saying it with my own mouth right now makes it feel unrealistic. I am glad I didn't tell Zef. I was about to amaze him by doing that." (Makoto)

In the time when I heard the talk of the Neptunes, even I thought that if we were to kill all the Neptunes that were on the brother's side, the hatred wouldn't remain, and Serwhale-san wouldn't have to worry about it in Asora. That's how I thought.

To have an outsider telling him about a different way of calming down the hatred aside from killing, moreover, asking their very Lord to persuade them, that would be stupid.

'Here, take this new land, now let's stop war', there's no way it would go so smoothly.

As expected, it is not good to try thinking about stopping the war with such light thoughts.

For now, I will do our activities as the Kuzunoha Company, and drag down the Goddess at a point in time. It is fine to only think about that for now.

Even in my life as a merchant, I have now become able to safely participate in the meetings of the Guild in Tsige and Rotsgard.

Not only between customers, I have begun to understand the importance of having connections between merchants as well. Not by pushing them away when offered money, or when offered something and making implicit promises.

Lately, I have been learning how to deal with the nobles with this foreign country visits.

I am far away from being competent enough, but if I just continue working steadily, I can gather experience no matter the case.

My essentials are bad, and the wider I open my arms, the amount of choices I have to decide will increase in proportion, so I just can't move forward the way I want.

That's why it can't be helped that I go by it slowly.

I will simply go forward in my own pace.

It may be this late in the game, but that's how I thought.

Chapter 218: Scaled Hot Spring

“For example; what would happen if we were to splash water into high temperature oil?”

“...That would be crazy dangerous. The people that have done that probably received heavy burns, and maybe even create a fire. What’s with that example, Shiki?” (Makoto) “Why is that?” (Shiki)

“Water and oil don’t get along. If you were to do that, the hot oil would fly around and might become a big disaster. That’s why when cooking deep-fried food, there’s the need to be careful of not letting water in. Even if it’s only a small amount, it would be dangerous.” (Makoto) “That... would I be able to understand it with this textbook, with the so called phenomenons that are written here?” (Shiki) “The physics textbook? Shiki, if you are to bring something out, it has to be a cooking book.” (Makoto) Seriously.

That Shiki, what does he intend to do by suddenly bringing out several physic books?

Something like ‘what would happen if water is poured onto hot oil’ should be written in books that teach how to make deep-fried food.

—Outskirts of Kaleneon.

In the place that was once a reservoir, there’s me, Shiki, Ema, and the Eldwas’ Elder, moreover, there’s also Ruria who had gotten better now.

The Draupnir was slowly swaying inside the magma as per usual and emitting heat.

It isn’t showing any signs of going out of control.

Even though it did go out of control when it left my hand. Just what’s going on? I don’t understand at all.

If Ema, the Elder, and Shiki, are able to understand something, it would be great.

Shiki threw me a strange conversation and was derailing a bit though.

I separate from the three who were gazing inside the hole that was once a pond, and sit on a bench that we made with a tree.

“Waka-sama, there’s a lot of points that differ, but the explosion that Serwhale spoke about, probably happens in Waka-sama’s world as well.” (Shiki) “Eh?”

“I think it is close to the phenomenon called vapor explosion. Do you know about it?” (Shiki) Vapor explosion.

It is a word I feel I have heard before.

Though, I feel like it was from a novel or a manga.

Did I learn that in physics?

I do remember about dust explosion though.

It was famous because an explosion incident of this type occurred in a mine and caused deaths.

Vapor explosion huh.

Could it be...

“Ah, could it be you were referring to that when you were talking about the oil and water just now?” (Makoto) “Yes. As a phenomenon, I think it is a befitting comparison. The basic explanation of a vapor explosion is that when water makes contact with a high temperature material it will vaporize precipitously.” (Shiki) “...”

Radical vaporization.

Meaning it vaporizes all at once huh.

It is true that the Draupnir fell into the reservoir with a temperature that was a lot higher than I anticipated.

And, that explosion occurred.

As a result, the water was gone and had become like muddy lava.

There’s no doubt that the water in that pond had all evaporated in a short amount of time.

So that was the steam that robbed me of my vision at that time huh.

...I didn't think Shiki was studying in physics already.

Moreover, he is in the position of teaching me.

In physics, I liked the calculations quite a bit, but as a subject, it was one of my weakest points. I feel slightly miserable.

“Even if a small ring were to become a high heat source, I don't know yet if that could create an explosion of that scale though. There was no explosion energy formula written in the books after all. In the first place, the ring should have been blown away somewhere by the explosion, and yet, the Draupnir is right there, so I am just saying that the phenomenon is close to that of a vapor explosion though. What Serwhale called a natural result is probably referring to this phenomenon.” (Shiki) That's true.

If the water evaporated and created an explosion after the ring touched the water surface, the impact of it should have made the ring fly out somewhere.

It is not such a heavy object after all.

It is a phenomenon that can be explained by science, but there's no doubt that the explosion had fantasy elements in several points as well.

“It shouldn't have emitted such high temperature to begin with, so as expected, it is an unfortunate accident. I was able to properly control it when it was in my hands though. How complicated. A vapor explosion huh. Let's remember that.” (Makoto) “When the water vaporizes, the volume increases by more than a thousand times, and there's the chance that the heat of the ring contributed in adding fire into the explosion. The hydrogen probably also suffered an outbreak, so it is a possibility...but with the estimated power it should have had, it is still...” (Shiki) ...

What Shiki was saying was about to leave the limits of what I understand.

I have studied a decent amount, but my life was basically using the bow.

If we were to do a test now, I would probably get lower scores than Shiki.

But how is it that he is able to get so much practical knowledge when there's no teacher and only has books as reference?

As I thought, Shiki is impressive.

"I understand now what happened at that time. And so, now we have to think about what to do about it. Eva and the others can't do anything about it, so maybe it should be better to remove it from here and take it back to Asora." (Makoto) "It is pretty stable, so I think it is possible to put it to practical use just like this." (Shiki) "Wouldn't it be dangerous for the town if there's a magma pond at their vicinities?" (Makoto) "It will most likely be a big blessing along with the hot springs that were excavated in the mountains of Kaleneon. Also, even if it is close to the town, it is not a distance where children would be able to get close to. If there's an idiotic adult that falls into this place, that person wouldn't have lived long anyways, so it is not something we need to mind." (Shiki) "I see..." (Makoto)

"This heat can be used. The snow in the surroundings of the pond has melted and the temperature is high. For Kaleneon, it can currently be used as a place to throw away the snow. The current state is that hills of snow have been piled up around all the place after all. With that, it will probably affect the functions of the town as well." (Shiki) "But it is far for a disposal, right? It is true that there's the need for a place to dispose of the snow though. Narrow alleys are buried after all." (Makoto) Even in the parts of Japan that were faced with tremendous snowfalls, there were aqueducts made for the melted snow, did they have some sort of vacant land to temporarily gather the snow?

...But I haven't lived in a part like that, so I don't know.

In Nakatsuhara, the snow would pile up a few centimeters once every few years, so there was obviously no countermeasure for the snow, I think.

And in truth, when that happened, I remember the trains and busses were in great disorder.

When I was young, the snow was simply something to be happy about,

but when snow fell in the senior high school exam, it was rough.

I felt like I was being confined inside the bus.

“If it’s only a distance like this, we can use the dwarfs and adventurers to perform the maintenance. If they stayed shut in the town, their skills will simply grow duller. The hot spring that Tomoe-dono is working on will most likely have the piping underground, so it will take some time before it can be brought to the town.” (Shiki) Using the hot spring to deal with the melted snow was a proposal that was done to deal with the snow in the next years, so there’s no problem in that.

“Waka-sama.”

“Ema, and the Elder-san. Did you guys grasp something?” (Makoto)

While I was thinking about whether to speak about the proposal of Shiki to Eva, Ema and the Elder approached us.

When I checked, I could see Ruria was also walking towards us.

“Yes. Thank you very much for bringing us with you. The internal magic power stored up in that Draupnir has changed into heat and working stably as a heating device. I estimate that it will be able to maintain its current state for around 5 years.” (Ema) 5 years.

It really lasts.

“But the process in which was used to reach that state, bluntly speaking, I don’t understand it. I discussed with Ema-dono, but can we have Waka-sama do several trial runs of what you did and create Draupnirs similar to that?” (Elder) “I see. If we make trial runs of the same circumstances, there’s the chance that a similar Draupnir might come out.” (Makoto) Then that’s a plan.

Shiki also said that it would be okay for Kaleneon to use it, so it seems like it is better if that magma and ring are not retrieved.

I was thinking about scooping it out with the arms that I haven’t used once since the incident in the demon race territory, but it seems like there will be no turn for it.

“Looking at the moment it is created, we can research it from zero. I think that by doing that, we will surely be able to utilize the Draupnir in a near future.” (Ema) I nod at the petition of Ema and the Elder.

“Understood. When you have prepared a place to test it, tell me. I will do what I can.” (Makoto) “Thank you very much!”

“Regarding this place, just like Shiki said, we are thinking of having Eva and the others think about the method to utilize it. Regarding the mountains, Kuzunoha will be dealing with it, so you will be able to use the help of adventurers.” (Makoto) “Yes. Thank you for hearing our plight.” (Eva)

I am the one that wants to lower his head, but Shiki lowered his head deeply before I did.

The hot spring was a success and the reservoir was a failure, but it is great to see that there's a way to somehow utilize the reservoir one.

“Raidou-sensei! That pond of bright red fire, it seems like it will stay like that for 5 years!”

“Ruria, for a person that has recently recovered from a cold, you are pretty energetic.” (Makoto) “Well, of course! Looking at something like this, makes my motivation spring forth!” (Ruria) “Motivation huh.” (Makoto)

“This is something I thought since the time you were a customer of ours but, the things that you do and the things you accomplish are all things that can't be imitated by others, Sensei.” (Ruria) Ruria was in an excited state.

She had taken off her winter clothes and was holding it between her arms.

It is certainly true that those clothes are not necessary around here since it is hot and it would just make you drenched in sweat.

“In regards to that, I think that Shiki was the one who was the strangest one of the two though.” (Makoto) “The cream Nabe, right? It is true that that was a product with a mysterious popularity and only a limited

amount of people ordered it. By the way, I don't understand what's good about it at all." (Ruria) "That's how it should be." (Makoto)

"I have tried using ingredients from these areas to make such cream, like a soup with thickness, but it is not sweet." (Ruria) "Yeah yeah. If it were something like stew, I would understand." (Makoto)

"In a forest slightly further away from here, there's a delicious bird that's used for those kind of dishes. When this place is given proper maintenance and it is made as a base or a resting point, we will be able to secure a good amount of those as ingredients. I am happy!" (Ruria) Forest.

Ah, the one that Ruria is pointing at huh.

If there's one base point along the way to the town, it would be in a distance that's good enough to make it possible.

It doesn't feel like the forest would be able to provide much in a deep winter though. At the very least, it seems like there's an edible bird there, so there might be worth in going.

"A bird huh. Now that you mention it, does the bird called Snow Bird taste any good?" (Makoto) I remember the bird that Serwhale defeated.

If it tastes good, I don't mind bringing it here next time.

"...Sensei, to get that you would need to go to those mountains over there, so I haven't prepared one of those before." (Ruria) "Ah, I see." (Makoto)

"The Ares Bird that appears in that forest is troublesome, but not to the point of being impossible to hunt." (Ruria) "Ares Bird. It has a more troublesome sounding name than Snow Bird though." (Makoto) It sounds like a God of war.

"Compared to them, not at all. In summertime they have a bright red body and move in flocks, so it is difficult to defeat them, but their individual strength is not worth of mention. In winter, their bodies turn pure white and slip into the snow as they slowly move in it, so it is hard to find them, but it is easier to hunt them than in summer. By the way, the taste changes depending if it's summer or winter, but no matter which it

is, both taste good.” (Ruria) Turns completely white in winter, wait, is that a ptarmigan or something?

In summer they are easier to find, but you have to deal with them in flocks.

In winter they are easier to hunt, but are harder to find.

A bird that is somewhat troublesome.

“At first, the meat was hard and stinky, so I thought it was impossible to eat though. The only things I can do are related to food, right? That’s why I find things that can be made into food like crops, animals; and try to make ways to prepare them. The Ares Bird is high grade and can be obtained in great numbers, so I did my best.” (Ruria) “You researched and found a way to eat it?” (Makoto)

“Yes. It is no good to always rely on the food of Sensei’s place after all. The people of Kaleneon have to find a way to fill the stomach of the people living in Kaleneon. Right now I am in the middle of researching a method to process the surplus of summer to preserve it.” (Ruria) “That’s impressive.” (Makoto)

Seriously.

I have never tried to research the way to eat in a delicious manner a crop that I have seen for the first time or a meat.

Japan was abundant in recipes after all.

The preparation method of the ingredients that I obtained could be found in the internet or books.

Even if it is possible to check with magic if it is poisonous, this is pretty impressive.

“That’s not true. Sensei is the impressive one for being able to create a pond like this. Having a place as warm as this even though it is winter, I have begun to think that it will be possible to somehow overcome this year’s winter. There’s many ways to utilize it after all!” (Ruria) Melt snow.

Get warmth.

.....

...

What more? Apply magic to it and do a lot of things.

Yeah, a lot of things.

True, there's a lot of things huh.

"...Yeah, you are right. I am happy to know that it will prove useful."

(Makoto) "This is no time for me to be catching a cold! Even though I only did something I was not used to, how embarrassing." (Ruria) "'Something you are not used to'?" (Makoto)

"I accompanied the adventurers to try better preparation methods of mamonos in the actual spot. The wounds and exhaustion of that time left me in bed for a while." (Ruria) "When you say 'preparation methods' are you talking about ways to beat them?" (Makoto) "No way! Things like draining the blood, and how to divide the cuts of the meat. Leaving aside the raw materials, when it comes to ingredients, the cases where the adventurers just grab a random portion of it are many. And many of those cases, they bring portions that are not suitable as food." (Ruria) "..."

...There's so much to it.

It is certainly true that depending on the type of fish, the way of fishing and breeding changes.

If they are not treated as materials but ingredients, the way that the adventurers deal with it can certainly be considered sloppy.

Even if Ruria teaches them the appropriate process, the problem is if whether they will actually put them into practical use.

"In the end, the ingredients that are processed with the correct method will increase in worth, so we would be able to buy it at a higher price. So there's advantages for the adventurers as well. Even if there are times when they can't do it, when they have the leeway to, they have the option to, so it helps us out." (Ruria) It feels like she saw through me.

"Like a fated relationship between the workers and the strong?"

(Makoto)

“...Onee-chan and I want to be of help after all. There’s not much I can help in regards to politics, so it is just the least I can do though.” (Ruria)
Ruria makes a strained laugh.

The government is a den of thieves.

I think that Ruria is doing the right choice.

There’s strong and weak points for everyone.

If Ruria does what Ruria can do and she is able to contribute to Kaleneon in that way, I think that’s fine.

But saying you can’t in anything is most likely self-depreciating you way too much.

Even I understand just how important is food for a country.

The many techniques that Ruria will create in the future will become a strength for Eva, no doubt about it.

No matter how they say it, they are properly helping each other out.

...Ah, I see.

“Eva is having it hard as well, but we will help out too. When spring comes, the snow will melt, and the cultivation of new land will progress. The lack of workers can be obtained by soliciting the Adventurer Guild. It is fine to support Eva, but try not to burden too much of it by yourself.”
(Makoto) Zef said that Kuzunoha is beginning to deviate as a company.

One of the reasons why is because we don’t really depend much on anyone else, maybe?

If there’s things a company lacks, the company will obtain it from another place.

Just like how craftsmen obtain their materials; an obvious thing to do.

But if the Kuzunoha Company wanted to, we would be able to resolve everything with just Asora.

When taking that into account...it is certainly true that we are different.

When you are lacking something, depending on other companies is the obvious thing to do, but there's no harm in not doing it.

Even if the company changes into a country, that basis won't change.

Then if a country requires an important supply from another country in order to maintain itself and ends up depending on it, it will become a certain weakness.

Is the thought I reached to when thinking about Kaleneon.

In that case...won't it be pretty hard to destroy Kuzunoha Company from the outside?

It seems like it wasn't only me who had a high defensive power, Kuzunoha Company does too.

Yeah.

The way of dealing with companies that Zara-san and Rembrandt-san told me about, there are quite a lot of those that can't be used against Kuzunoha.

The employees are a force to be reckoned with, and there's also Asora that holds us like a family.

The stocking that we do in public is a simple front, so there's no problem if we were to lose that.

In the first place, if they were to interfere in transportation related stuff, we can just teleport.

We have enough support from our customers that we are already on the point that even if we were to gain enemies in Tsige or Rotsgard, we would be able to laugh it away.

Our balance is enlarging every month, so there's no issues with money for the time being.

It has only been a few years since we began, but...at some point in time, we have become quite the troublesome company.

Meeting Rembrandt-san at an early stage had a big effect in it as well,

but the number one reason of it was because everyone is doing their best. I am truly grateful.

“Yes, I will do my best!” (Ruria)

“Shiki! We are returning soon. What about you two?” (Makoto)

After looking at Kuzunoha Company again and getting a better opinion of it, I was strangely moved.

I call out Ema and the Elder that were at my side.

Whether they will be going back to Asora, or go to the town.

The two have comrades and subordinates in the town, so I have to ask them first what they will be doing.

“I will be accompanying everyone to the town. We will have to revise the plans of this and the hot springs. There’s a number of Highland Orcs that can be placed for the snow disposal, so I have to talk about those topics with Eva.” (Ema) Ema is strict with Eva.

But it is not like she is just whipping her.

I secretly think that she is actually expecting things from her.

“I will also go check out the work and state of the young ones. I also have an interest in the hot springs, so after that, I was thinking about helping out Tomoe-sama. Is that okay?” (Elder) “Got it.” (Makoto)

Eh? There’s no reaction from Shiki.

He is facing the pond with his eyes closed, his right hand on his mouth and muttering.

“But even if it were to reach the limit amount of Waka-sama’s magic power that it can store...the efficiency of the heat conversion has... activated as a result...no matter how I think about it, the price of both formulas are not equivalent...” (Shiki) “Shiki!” (Makoto)

“But if that’s the case, that’s practically...” (Shiki)

“Shiki!” (Makoto)

“!!! Yes, what is it?!” (Shiki)

“...We are returning. Is something the matter?” (Makoto)

“Ah, understood. I am sorry. I ended up falling in deep thought about something trivial. It seems like the subject called physics is more interesting than I thought.” (Shiki) “...Well, keep it in moderation, okay? And so, Tomoe was going to be shut in the mountains for the whole day, right?” (Makoto) Shiki walks at my side as I began to walk.

The topics like magic and agriculture are already plenty difficult to study, but on top of that, he is trying his hand on physics as well. It can't be helped that I am worrying if he will be okay.

If he is stuffing himself too much with things, I should have him rest sometime.

At this rate, I feel like he is shaving off his sleeping time to read books.

“...Yes. She was pumped up saying that she will make it take form in two days. Mio-dono is also together with her.” (Shiki) “Mio too? That's rare. Does she have an interest in hot springs?” (Makoto) “It seems like her interest is not in the hot spring itself though.” (Shiki) While holding his forehead, Shiki speaks as if having difficulty in saying it.

So it isn't a direct interest?

“Is it related to the beautifying elements, or the health side?” (Makoto)

“No, I think Mio-dono is interested in the custom of mixed bathing.” (Shiki) “Mixed...bathing?” (Makoto)

What the hell?

Mixed baths in hot springs?

No well, there were mixed baths in Japan as well, but...they are not common.

Most of the hot springs are divided in men and women.

When there are cases where there is only one, they normally divide the times of usage.

The times when mixed bathing in hot springs was normal should be

around the Edo period...

Edo?

Don't tell me...so that's what it is?!

"Yes. Tomoe-dono thinks that it is a standard that hot springs are mixed and she has explained that to Mio-dono. As commemoration for safely finishing the maintenance of it, she said it is the norm to have four people entering the bath first." (Shiki) "F-Four..." (Makoto)

"Of course, counting Waka-sama, we all make four." (Shiki)

Shiki says this straight.

What a pitfall...

We are talking about Tomoe who employed the Ryo in the currency of Asora even though it is slightly irregular.

It is certainly true that it was possible.

I should have thought about it in an Edo manner.

"About us four entering...were those two looking forward to it?"
(Makoto)

"Of course. Even I am interested in this thing called hot springs. I am looking forward to it." (Shiki) "Is that so..." (Makoto)

Well...I will just prepare myself.

In any case, having a mixed bath inside that white-out mountain, it is obvious that there will only be steam and snowstorms, so the only thing that will be coming out of it is a wry smile.

I feel sorry for Tomoe though.

From the beginning, it was a hot spring that I dug for the sake of the town, so it can't be helped that the location of it is a popular dangerous mountain.

I hope she is not trying to make it a high quality hot spring district.

As long as they don't get glued to me, I will be able to make it through.

It is the same as entering the hot spring with your family.

Even so...I should have told them to divide it in male and female beforehand.

What a blunder.

“It seems Tomoe-dono was planning on making quite a lot of different types of outdoor baths and seemed to be truly having fun.” (Shiki) <鱗、毛、水棲、大型, these are the types of baths he mentioned. No idea of the english counterpart.> “Eh?” (Makoto)

Why aren't you dividing those between men and women?!

Why did it become mixed baths?!

I didn't voice it out. I have already resolved myself.

I felt the irrationality.



“Levi, I am sorry.”

“It is fine if you understand, as long as you understand.” (Levi)

In the demonic mountain of Kaleneon where powerful mamonos live in.

It will soon stop being called a demonic mountain and be called a hot spring mount, but leaving that future aside...

The Scylla, Levi, came to this mountain with Makoto the other day, but returned to Asora before encountering any mamonos. And now, she is shouldering a stone that is bigger than her and talking to a Lorelai young man that is staggering beside her.

He was currently using magic to make the construction tools float as he transports them.

The two of them were participating in the creation of the hot spring.

But the two were currently in a location slightly further away from the other members.

“I am surprised by how Serwhale-dono and Waka-sama were able to

walk through this kind of mountain.”

“Those two are weird. It is also true that it is crazy cold, but this place not only messes up with your sense of distance, your sense of balance is also gone, right?” (Levi) “Yeah, I couldn’t even tell where I was at all. It is a scary place.”

“It is certainly true that I underestimated the cold, so when I heard the talk of Tomoe-sama, I volunteered myself with the intentions of conquering this, but I still don’t have the courage to leave the barrier of Tomoe-sama. Waka-sama and Serwhale-san were doing casual talk as they walked straight to this place, you know?!” (Levi) “Umu...when I heard that Levi had lost to the cold and ran back, I thought that it would be good material to tease you, but...this is the real deal. Even when I stretched my own hand, I could only see it slightly. Not being able to move at all is no joke. Actually the likelihood of dying is high.”

In order to teach the young Lorelai man, who laughed at her, about how cruel of an environment this mountain that made her give up was, Levi brought him to a place slightly separated from the group.

And then, the man that slightly left the boundaries of the barrier, had apologized to Levi after a few minutes.

This mountain that takes three days to reach from Kaleneon to there in all seasons except winter. It isn’t a place with an environment that people can step into in that cold season.

Strong mamonos, constantly raging blizzards, the snow flies around in different directions as if crazy, even the snow piled up on the ground is blown up by the strong winds and it is practically as if your vision has been taken out completely.

Obviously, the only thing that reaches the ears is the roaring sound of the wind. The higher you advance, the lower the temperature. In time, it will change to ice and even in mornings, the light will be completely blocked out.

Not only fighting, it is a mountain where you can’t even stop your steps.

It is definitely not a situation where one would do casual talk and drill their way underground.

Currently, they are able to work thanks to the barrier of Tomoe that is covering the areas where the hot springs are.

It is that kind of situation.

Inside the barrier the snow won't be able to enter, and the strong wind is mostly cut off.

The temperature is around zero degrees, but compared to the outside, the temperature is relatively higher and stable. And for the Asora residents that are doing work, it is a state where they can do their work without any problems.

The only reason why Levi and the young man can be there is because of the barrier of Tomoe.

In any case, the two who had finished their business, returned in a hurried pace to the working place where everyone gathers, and went to work on what they were assigned.

"The set up is going well-ja na. Mio is also motivated, so the work is progressing~." (Tomoe) "Rock baths, cypress baths, footbaths, stream baths... And also, this... you are making so many different types, Tomoe-sama."

"Umu, I am counting on you. In the country of Waka, bathing was a type of leisure they had. The hot spring facilities of Waka's country that I used as reference had a variety of styles like that. At times, the hot springs could be used as travelling locations. We can't slacken in this-ja. It will be difficult, but since we have the chance, I want to satisfy Waka. I am counting on you." (Tomoe) In a sense, this could be considered the derivation of a super bath-house. A hot spring resort.

If Makoto were to hear of this, he would probably be wondering what point in the Edo period he has fallen into.

They are planning on reproducing the traditional bath-house design, so in Tomoe's words, it would be: small things form a big one.

Footbaths, boiling baths, even saunas were planned on being integrated.

“That’s true. Well, there’s worth for us too in doing this. Leave it to us. Also, the plan of drawing the hot springs to Kaleneon is interesting. Hm? Sorry, excuse me. What is it?”

The older dwarf that noticed the young craftsman approaching, asked for the consent of Tomoe and puts a pause to the conversation.

“Master, regarding the composition of the hot spring we were tasked to by Tomoe-sama, it seems like there’s a slight problem.”

“What is it?”

“We found sediment from the hot springs. From what we have confirmed, it might be an insoluble component that when hardened, it can make it precipitate.”

“...Meaning that it might block the plumbing we were going to use for heating?”

“Yes.”

“...Fumu. Leave the ones experienced in carpentry just where they are, the others remaining, make one team and investigate it. If it is a plumbing that is underground and doesn’t touch the air, there might not be any problems, but there’s the need to confirm it. If it can block it, we might need to do trial runs with the material properties of the plumbing and with the permanent enchant magic. Also, try asking for the opinion of the other races. They might tell us something that we don’t know about.”

“Yes!”

The dwarf that was talking with Tomoe, received a report of a problem from one of his subordinates, and worked out a plan to deal with it.

Looking at this, Tomoe nods with a satisfied expression.

The works that require brute force are dealt mostly by Mio. The grounds have been secured and the soil preparation is already progressing.

The important hot spring also has no issues when bathing in it, and it was practically the same as the hot springs she knows of.

The craftsmen dwarfs are also moving well.

And so, the hot spring plan is progressing smoothly.

Tomoe had a wide smile as she supervised the work.

But suddenly the eyes of Tomoe turned cold and sharp.

It was only for a mere second.

“Well then, I am sorry, but I will be leaving it to you for a while. I will return by evening. Make sure to deal with the things only after you have gotten a grasp of it. If there’s any problems with the barrier, you can ask Mio.” (Tomoe) “...Understood. Have a safe trip!”

“Umu.”

Tomoe disappears within the Mist Gate.

The destination was related to the cold eyes just now.

She was concentrated in making reality the hot springs she is so expectant of, but she intended to take care of something before that.

“...”

At that place, there’s a silent lake.

A lake that Tomoe and also her master had visited before.

Name is the Meiris Lake.

Without any joy in her expression, Tomoe unsheathed her katana and waves it.

A truly mysterious spectacle appeared.

From the tracks of Tomoe’s katana, an island in the middle of Meiris Lake was visible, and no matter what part one looked at, there was no other place aside from there where the island could be seen.

The katana of Tomoe was swung again.

The flash that shone, faintly spread out like a rift, and Tomoe entered it.

She disappeared inside it, and after a while, the rift disappeared and the Meiris Lake returned to silence.

“You would obviously be on guard when your domain has been invaded, huh. But in the first place, there’s no way something that didn’t even work on weaklings like Sofia and Lancer, would work on me. Now then...” (Tomoe) While checking the surroundings, Tomoe mutters this and swallows one big breath.

“WATERFALL!! COME OUT!!!” (Tomoe)

With a hand on her katana, Tomoe calls for the master of this domain.

“Muh? A familiar? I wanted to skip the unnecessary stuff, so I went through the trouble of shouting out loud though.” (Tomoe) Tomoe turns her eyes towards the presence that appeared from the water surface, and in that place stood the Gel mamono that guided Makoto and Hibiki to that world.

“Bring out Waterfall. As it is a business between Superior Dragons, there’s no room for you to appear, familiar.” (Tomoe) “...”

The Gel trembles in a disorderly manner.

But it didn’t seem like it was intending to call for Waterfall.

“Good grief... It is a pain, but can’t helped.” (Tomoe)

Tomoe sighs.

She holds the katana’s handle, and her eyes narrowed slightly.

“What’s your business, Shen? No, Tomoe.”

“If you are coming out to stop me, then come out from the very beginning. Don’t go doing something as pointless as waiting-and-seeing. Such a pain.” (Tomoe) Floating lightly on the air, a small dragon advances through the lake surface.

The recently reincarnated Waterfall.

It doesn’t seem like she is using her wings; she is using magic to fly.

When Tomoe places Waterfall in her field of vision, she immediately complained about not coming out right away, with her hand still on the handle of the katana.

“‘What’s your business in this rude visit?’, is what I asked though.”
(Waterfall) “As serious as always.” (Tomoe)

“It seems like you have changed quite a lot. Laziness and fickleness; I can’t believe you are the same Mist Dragon that was considered the symbol of indolence.” (Waterfall) “A lot happened.” (Tomoe)

“That’s intriguing.” (Waterfall)

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

A turbulent atmosphere flows between Tomoe and Waterfall.

“Now then, about that business. Waterfall, I don’t know what’s the reason of it, but you still have your memories from before, right?”
(Tomoe) “...I don’t know what’s your basis of this, but the only one who is able to do that within the Superior Dragons is Grount, Tomoe.”
(Waterfall) “Umu. That’s why Root and I were relieved. You guys were defeated by a weakling like Sofia, but as long as you were to reincarnate and return to life, there should be no problems. We didn’t put it much mind.” (Tomoe) “Then there’s no problems, right? I have heard from my familiars, but it is certainly true that it was a blunder of mine for being defeated by them. I will accept that critic of yours.” (Waterfall) “...But Waterfall, when I tried to read the memories of the egg of that guy Night Clad, Doma, the memory of Sofia killing him remained.” (Tomoe) “... That’s something that has never happened before. He didn’t have a power like that in the past, and yet, he reincarnated with those memories remaining. That’s just...” (Waterfall) “Crimson Red, Azuma, was recently born, but from what I confirmed, he retained his memories. In that case, it is strange that you are the only one that reincarnated as always, Waterfall.” (Tomoe) “Tomoe, please cut it out. Even if I had my previous memories, what does it have to do with you invading here?” (Waterfall) “If that weren’t the case...there wouldn’t be any other explanation of why you are so cautious of Waka-ja yo. That would also serve as the reason why you are defending your memories and not letting me see them.” (Tomoe) “Cautious of Raidou? Just what in the world are you saying?” (Waterfall)

“In the memories of Waka, you were clearly overly cautious of him. Don’t you understand? That served as ‘the trigger for me to investigate the memories of Doma and Azuma’-ja. This was a doubt that was born from your behaviour.” (Tomoe) Tomoe continues her words in a quiet manner.

The words of Tomoe mentioning the ‘memories within Waka’, had clearly made Waterfall show surprise.

But the surprise soon disappeared and confidence returns to her expression.

“Fufu, the memories of Waka? You who are under control of Raidou? There’s no way you would be able to see the memories of your master. Please stop playing bluffs.” (Waterfall) “...Our relationship is slightly special you see. Waka shows me his memories without any frugality. Well, after saying all of this, there should be no need to confirm it though.” (Tomoe) The atmosphere flowing between the two changes slightly.

Tomoe changed it.

“Showing memories to others without being frugal about it? There’s no way there’s someone as stupid as that. And Raidou is not the type of person who would let others see his memories.” (Waterfall) “Fuh, what do you understand about Waka? Looking at those two, and still expecting something from Hibiki; there’s no way someone like that would understand him.” (Tomoe) “...No way, to think that there was actually a master who would show his memories to his subordinates. An existence as crazy as that is just...” (Waterfall) “You miscalculated. You intended to move in the shadows, but it was easily exposed. Waterfall, you should understand as well, right? My objective is your life-ja.” (Tomoe) “A fight to the death between Superior Dragons? Has Raidou driven you to such a point of insanity, Tomoe?” (Waterfall) The words of Waterfall made Tomoe laugh hard.

“Might be the case. That person seriously possesses a drug-filled appeal-ja.” (Tomoe) “No matter how you think about it, those words should be denoting the heroes though.” (Waterfall) “Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder. There’s also the way of thinking that even when the person is

admired by the general public, there's actually not a single one that's truly into it. There's people that simply gather upon the greatest common divisor. Our side might be the opposite of that though. Our Waka isn't popular in the millions, but is truly admired by a small amount of people. That's the kind of person he is-ja yo." (Tomoe) "I couldn't see that charm at all though." (Waterfall)

"As expected. That's why you joined hands with Hibiki, right? You let Waka into your treasured library, and introduced him to some dubious recall ritual because of your caution and fear towards him. You wanted to erase Waka from this world as soon as possible." (Tomoe) "The recall ritual was something I thought he wished for though." (Waterfall) "I won't deny that. But that ritual has quite the peculiarity. The analysis has not been completed yet, but it is definitely not a proper ritual." (Tomoe) "I also don't know the details of it. The only thing I know is that the summoned one will be send back to his original world." (Waterfall) "...Hmph. Well, I don't need to ask you about it. I feel sorry for you guys since you just reincarnated, but...I will have you reincarnate once more. It would be annoying to have more people doing sneaky stuff on our backs." (Tomoe) "That you have come to my domain alone and have said this, makes me doubt your real intentions, Tomoe. You and I, when we are in our own domains, it is practically impossible to lo—wait, did you say 'you guys'? Don't tell me, you..." (Waterfall) "I took care of Azuma; Doma by Root though. For now, it seems they haven't retained their memories. Their deaths were irregular, so we are looking after them." (Tomoe) "...Raidou is a bigger danger to this world than the Goddess. Why is it that you and Root don't understand something so simple?" (Waterfall) Tomoe unsheathed her katana without saying any words.

The air got tense in an instant.

"I won't let you activate Asora in my domain. I won't repeat the mistake I did with Sofia." (Waterfall) "How pitiful-ja na. I didn't have the intentions of using Asora in the first place. Sorry to say this but, with you and I, it won't even be considered a fight." (Tomoe) Tomoe swings her katana in a direction that differed from the magic clad Waterfall.

Like a clionidae in the moment of devouring its prey, the Gel had commenced an attack on Tomoe, but was cut in half.

Even though it was a quick and silent motion, Tomoe didn't take her eyes off Waterfall as she cut it.

The past figure of Tomoe leaving it all to brute strength when swinging a katana, was not there anymore.

It was the start of the battle.

“You!!”

Reacting to the voice of Waterfall, several shining water pillars rouse from the lake.

In this space she has configured herself, moreover, with a spell she is specialized in, there was no need for Waterfall to utilize arias in order to activate spells.

The countless whirling water pillars that were freely twisting and drawing a trajectory, attacked Tomoe.

However, Tomoe was looking at that situation without a single trace of agitation. Waterfall had no idea what she was thinking.

And then, Tomoe sheathed her katana back.

“Do you think you can endure it just because you have resistance to it?!”
(Waterfall) “...”

Without even moving, the whirling water pillars passed through Tomoe one after the other.

Being raised in midair, she was being attacked by the raging water inside it.

“?!!”

Waterfall who was looking at that spectacle, gulped her breath.

It's a natural response.

Because everything had disappeared.

It was as if time had rewinded to the moment before Waterfall had activated that big spell.

Just one thing was different. Tomoe's figure was not in the place where she should be, and Waterfall who had noticed that instantly, follows her figure.

"You are slow." (Tomoe)

"Im...possible." (Waterfall)

Hearing the voice that came from the skies, Waterfall unconsciously groaned.

But she can't do an appropriate counter.

She noticed Tomoe after she had already swung her katana.

"..."

A high-speed slash that can't be followed with the eyes.

It is the Iai stance that Tomoe was zealously practicing.

Tomoe passed by Waterfall who was floating in a slightly high position, and Waterfall felt that time unpleasantly slow.

And then, she loses sight of Tomoe again.

She didn't understand what in the world Tomoe did to her, and in the middle of her confusion, Waterfall decided to launch an attack from all directions and have Tomoe step back.

Even though it is a fight where both sides know each other's abilities, she couldn't understand the movements of Tomoe and was falling into confusion.

"Azuma was too, but as expected, you guys are weak." (Tomoe)

"Shen, over there?!!" (Waterfall)

Waterfall reflexively called Tomoe's old name, and at that time, she understood what happened to her own body.

Her field of vision slowly changes.

By the time she noticed that her head was cut off, it was obviously too late.

The head of Waterfall silently falls into the lake.

“Is it over already?” (Tomoe)

“...By no means.”

The head of Waterfall speaks out.

The lake surface freezes in an instant, and slightly after, the body stands on top of the frozen surface and grabs her head.

“You are like an undead-ja na.” (Tomoe)

Without getting surprised, Tomoe looked at Waterfall placing her own head back to its original place and made a sarcastic laugh.

“You should have predicted something like this when you decided to fight me in this space.” (Waterfall) “Of course-ja. But it seems like you can’t read my movements at all.” (Tomoe) “...That’s true. I thought you would fight as a warrior, but you use spells. And then, that action where you didn’t evade nor guard...an illusion, wasn’t it?” (Waterfall) “Correct.” (Tomoe)

“Knowing it is an illusion, it is easy to deal with it. There’s no point in illusions when you know it is one, you know?” (Waterfall) “Now then, I wonder about that.” (Tomoe)

Tomoe lowers her waist, and releases an Iai in that very place.

It was an overwhelming speed where one could only barely tell it was an overarm stroke.

The expression of Waterfall stiffens.

“What are you playing at?” (Waterfall)

“You will know soon.” (Tomoe)

“...How unpleasa—ah?” (Waterfall)

From the top of her shoulders, Waterfall felt a sharp heat.

Her vision is dyed completely red.

She was cut.

Several seconds passed before she was able to notice this reality.

“In the katana I gave to a subordinate of mine, there’s an ability called [Marking]. When the requirements are fulfilled, you can ignore the distance and freely cut your target. Of course, the consumption of magic power is not to be underestimated, but even so, if it is a fight using only a katana, there’s enough to spare. It seemed fun, so I had it enchanted in mine as well.” (Tomoe) “It was like an acrobatic.” (Waterfall)

The wound of Waterfall recovered in the blink of an eye.

Even when her head is cut off, or receives an obvious fatal wound, she is not affected by the damage.

Not even letting out a scream was abnormal.

“In terms of healing, there’s no Superior Dragon comparable to you, huh. Your reputation and skills have not dulled, it seems.” (Tomoe) “Do you think you can defeat me with an attack like this?” (Waterfall)

“I was only trying out my new sword, and confirming the results of my training-ja. Let’s end it already.” (Tomoe) As she finishes speaking, the figure of Tomoe multiplies like mirror images.

And all the Tomoes that were lined up horizontally had begun an aria.

“An illusion again?! I don’t know what you intend to do, but I won’t let you!” (Waterfall) Waterfall erases the increased Tomoes with magic one after the other.

But as she erases them, more Tomoes keep popping up, and the situation showed practically no change.

“An illusion of this scale...why are you able to do it here?! Could it be that I have been dragged into Asora without noticing?” (Waterfall) “I won’t do something so unnecessary.” (Tomoe)

“So you are there!” (Waterfall)

Facing the direction of Tomoe's voice, she increased her power in an instant and presents Tomoe with a blaze containing all her power.

Compared to the power of Root that Makoto witnessed, it would be considered an elementary level, but it was a blaze that had quite the power in contrast to that small body.

It looked like the blaze of Waterfall had caught Tomoe, but it quickly dimmed and disappeared.

Of course, Tomoe was okay.

"Just what in the world are you preparing?" (Waterfall)

"Even if you were to remember it, you still wouldn't be able to do anything against it though... [Pure Illusory Reality], that is the spell that killed you, you know." (Tomoe) "Killed? What are you saying?" (Waterfall)

"Maybe with this you will notice." (Tomoe)

When Tomoe points her arm at Waterfall, wind blew.

No magic power was used, it was genuine wind.

"Wind? What does this have to do with anyth—ing?!!" (Waterfall)

"..."

"My body has turned to mist?!" (Waterfall)

"Eternal dreams, illusions and reality; I wonder where is the boundary between those two." (Tomoe) Tomoe mutters as if monologuing.

The body of Waterfall begins to dim away from her legs and wings first, as if being drifted away by the wind.

Just like how Waterfall felt, it was as if wind was washing away mist; a strange spectacle that felt illusory.

"Do you think an illusion will—!" (Waterfall)

Waterfall immediately judged that what was happening was an illusion.

Even when she tried to wave it away or activate a spell, it was useless.

She couldn't understand the situation at all.

"It is pointless-ja. As long as you doubt it for a single instant, your very body will turn into an illusion itself. There's no path but disappearing-ja." (Tomoe) "A spell that can turn others into illusions, something like that... a power like that..." (Waterfall) "Then, are you going to accept attacks turning into illusions? Well, interpret it in whichever way you want. It is admirable that even when you are only a head, you still didn't show fear." (Tomoe) "Wait! Where are you going?!" (Waterfall)

"I am finished here. There's hot springs waiting for me. Also, if I were to arrive late for dinner, I will cause unnecessary worries to Waka. The matters of you and the other Superior Dragons, won't disarray the heart of that person." (Tomoe) "Shen...Tomoe! Wa-it..." (Waterfall)

"Well then, cya later, Waterfall." (Tomoe)

The figure of Waterfall disappeared.

And then, at that place, there was nothing moving anymore.

Even the familiars that should have had a relative amount of numbers.

Not a single one was breathing anymore.

Without turning around once, Tomoe left Meiris Lake.

Returning to Kaleneon, Tomoe burned her passion at the hot springs, had dinner with everyone like always, and passed the day as if nothing happened.

She didn't even let out a burp about killing Waterfall.

The unexpected present that Sofia left didn't bring out any new sparks, and silently became a solved incident without Makoto knowing.

Chapter 219: Hot Springs, an article of supreme bliss

One large hot spring resort.

This is a demonic mountain, try visiting it once~.

No wait, that's not it.

I accidentally escaped reality.

"This is way too amazing. What's with this hyper compilation of outdoor hot springs?" (Makoto) I arrived at the demonic mountain via Asora's Mist gate.

And what I saw there, was a giant hot spring resort like the ones unfolding at towns in development.

A big gate demarcated the inside and the outside, and at that other side, there's a rampaging blizzard that whites-out the landscape.

What an unrealistic place.

Even if I were to walk around lightly dressed, the temperature is adjusted to one similar to an open air bath which is not a problem.

There was no wind, and snow was falling quiet and moderately, giving it a sense of elegance.

"This is impressive. As expected of Tomoe-dono."

Shiki is also moved.

The spectacle of this many baths of different varieties lined up was kind of...worth seeing, so it is the obvious reaction.

There were things like rock based baths, footbaths, Goemon baths.

I feel like it is on a level I haven't seen even in Japan.

The most I have seen of a view like this, is in TV.

"Right, right?! This is a prided work of mine you know! I name it Oedo hot sprin—" (Tomoe) "Well, the name is rejected, so...how about leaving it

as Demonic Mountain's hot-spring village for now? Yeah." (Makoto)
"There's no mention of Edo in it, Waka!" (Tomoe)

"If it's hot springs with names related to Edo, you can leave that to when they are created in Asora. The experience of creating something like this will definitely prove useful at that time after all." (Makoto) "Mu-muuu. Since it is our long-awaited hot springs, it is certainly true that there's nothing better than having Waka name it himself, but...Fumu, let's leave the Edo name for the Asora hot spring. That's an option as well." (Tomoe)
The characteristic smell of sulfur drifts about in the whole hot spring.

And within that, there's also a nice scent of Hinoki cypress.

I heard that aside from rock baths, there's also baths made from things like cypress and wood, so I am actually looking forward to it.

Tomoe who had joined the conversation between Shiki and I, was already wearing a yukata.

There was no need to say it, but it was clear from her smiling face that she felt proud of how it turned out.

"Now then...let's enter. It seems like if we don't enter first, the others can't join." (Makoto) It seems like it is necessary for me to be the first one in using it, so no one has used this place yet.

The plan was to finish it in two days, and in that time, Tomoe and Mio realized most of the functions of the hot springs and made it possible to bathe in it, but in the end, the motivation of Tomoe and the Dwarfs involved in this exploded, and the plan of improving the hot springs began. A work that took three more days had taken place.

And so, it has come to this day.

The plan of drawing the hot springs to Kaleneon is also progressing smoothly, but in those three days, the only thing that sped up was the hot springs, and the plumbing part had advanced at a regular pace.

I heard that the work will take from 3 weeks to a month, and the work will advance by shifts.

In the rotation of the security, there were unexpectedly a lot of shifts with Neptunes and Levi.

Maybe it was quite a shock for Levi that she was unable to come with me and Serwhale-san.

“Well then, the changing room is over there.” (Tomoe) At the place that Tomoe pointed out, there’s a building for changing.

Mixed bath huh.

Well, Shiki is also coming along, so no choice but to prepare myself huh.

“Understood. Then Shiki, let’s go!” (Makoto)

“Waka-sama?!”

“Buh!! Mio?!!” (Makoto)

For some reason, in the changing room, there’s Mio who only has a towel equipped!

Yukata!

What happened to her yukata?!

“You haven’t changed yet? Shiki neither? You can just undress here.” (Mio) “No well, that’s a bit...I will change quickly so...” (Shiki) “M-Mio, you had a y-yukata, right? Where is it?” (Makoto) “Don’t need it. It is troublesome to put it on since I will be taking it off anyways, so I settled it by only using the towel.” (Mio) Don’t need it? Wait a sec there lady.

There’s a limit to being straight.

“A-At least wrap it around. You are only covering it with your arm.” (Makoto) I could see exposed parts from the glimpses I could get.

It was truly an excuse of a towel.

What a high destructive power –no, what a lack of defensive stat.

“...But isn’t it manners to not bring towels and hand towels inside the hot springs? I heard that from Tomoe-san.” (Mio) “Umu! Mio, that’s the right way.” (Tomoe)

What a thing.

It has become a top priority to eliminate this troublesome misunderstanding.

If this continues, it might turn into a situation where the men came in with only a leaf covering them.

In a place like this, and a mixed bath on top of that, I feel like it would be better if men and women were to enter in swimsuits.

“Right? I have learned from the hot springs. Now then, Waka-sama. Let’s hurry.” (Mio) “Ah, yeah...” (Makoto)

This is bad.

I felt like Tomoe with a yukata was pretty defenseless, but Mio has already surpassed the terrain of defenselessness.

Doing something like this with that figure and looks, I honestly am troubled in where to place my eyes.

Maybe I should just go blindfolded.

It wouldn’t trouble me since I have [Sakai] after all.

Things like chilling after taking a bath or getting dizzy for overstaying in it, honestly, I don’t have the confidence of avoiding those.

While thinking that, I enter the pretty big changing room with Shiki.

“This is also...quite wide.” (Makoto)

“I heard that it was made like this so that even the Highland Orcs and the Neptunes don’t find it inconvenient. But it is indeed wide.” (Shiki) The ceiling is also incredibly high. So spacious.

Right as I entered, there was a bucket that was letting out cold at my left side for some reason. When I peek to see what it is, there were a lot of bottles with yellow liquid inside.

...Fruit milk!

I don’t understand.

I seriously don't understand what period of time Tomoe was aiming for when she made these facilities.

At the very least, it is certain that it is not only aimed at the Edo hot springs.

Aside from it being a mixed bath, where else is it Edo-like?

No well, with only this wideness, I can feel it is old-style though.

"Well, let's find a free place anywhere." (Makoto) A place around the entrance would be easier.

"No, Waka-sama. That." (Shiki)

"Hm?" (Makoto)

I use my eyes to follow the place where Shiki points at.

...

Hey hey.

"There a sign that says Waka and Shiki... Are they telling us to use those?" (Makoto) "Must be. Let's go." (Shiki)

Why do they have to divide the changing rooms too?

While having a wry smile, I approach the place with the sign and take off my coat.

When I loosen my belt and enter inside...

"So when inside, it is divided again between Shiki and I huh. Seriously, what a strange set up. With how things are here, could it be that Tomoe and Mio also have their own private rooms in the changing room?"

(Makoto) "Anyways, let's change fast. It is heartrending to have those two wait in that appearance after all." (Shiki) "Got it." (Makoto)

Shiki and I separate.

Even so, I was amazed while my lower half was nude.

Instead of calling it a changing room, it was literally a room.

The air conditioning was managed in a better way than the outside, and

it was luxury itself.

There's even a table, bed, and sofa.

There's several types of drinks placed there.

This is kind of impressive.

With this much space, forget about changing room, I could even live here.

Men don't take much time in changing, so I obviously finished preparing without taking much time.

The only thing I needed to do was take off my clothes and wrap a towel around after all.

I place an extra towel on my shoulder and exit the room.

"Shiki, you okay there?" (Makoto)

I tried calling Shiki who was still not here.

"Yes, I am back." (Shiki)

"...Shiki, what is that?" (Makoto)

"What do you mean? Is there anything strange?" (Shiki) The towel that was supposed to be wrapped around his waist, was being used to wrap his long hair up.

It was like a model in a shampoo commercial.

And his lower half was completely exposed.

How shameless.

"...Bring another towel and wrap it around your waist." (Makoto) "Oh~, I thought the towels were to avoid having the hair inside the hot springs. So wrapping it around your waist is also the hot spring style huh. Well then..." (Shiki) I see.

I didn't need to worry about letting my hair inside the bath since I have never had my hair so long, so I didn't notice.

I think that the consideration of Shiki was not wrong.

And since we are within family, there's not really any need to hide the bottom...

But there's no problem in having it on, right?

No matter the case, embarrassing things will stay embarrassing.

I leave outside with Shiki who had returned.

We regrouped with Tomoe and Mio who were waiting in the same place.

"Sorry for the wait." (Makoto)

"Waka-sama, the first one should be the cypress bath, right? Waka-sama, you said before that you liked baths with the smell of cypress after all." (Mio) "Right. If there's a cypress bath, I would like to try it first."

(Makoto) "Then it is over here!" (Tomoe)

It still hasn't begun, and yet, I was already having troubles with where to look.

My first experience of a hot spring in a parallel world has begun.



"This is splendid. It feels like the exhaustion in my body and mind are melting inside the hot water; and in exchange, a gentle sensation enters to replace it~. It is truly~~ nice." (Shiki) Shiki was submerged to his neck in the water and was enjoying the hot spring.

His eyes were relaxed and his mouth was bringing out a natural smile.

He was stretching his body and looked like he was truly feeling good.

Not too hot, and not too lukewarm.

Maybe it is around 40°?

"Healing exhaustion, works for stiff shoulders, and it also blows away stress. It is truly the bath that promotes good health-ja na!" (Tomoe) "I thought that it was simply bathing in hot water, but to think it was like this. I tip my hat, Tomoe-dono. This tree, it is called a hinoki cypress, right? This is also nice. A truly relaxing scent." (Shiki) "Umu! I heard about this from Waka, but after actually placing it at a hot spring and

entering it, I can really tell the good in it. The flaw is that it slips easy when wet, but I also dealt with it properly.” (Tomoe) Tomoe responds to Shiki with full confidence as she enjoys the bath.

It is certainly true that the Hinoki bath is nice.

It was such a nice thing huh. Once again I feel this way.

I was actually worried about the footing being slippery, but it seems that was unnecessary worry.

Maybe the inside of the hot spring has something done to it as well, there's practically no rough sensation at all and was simply comfortable.

“ ... ”

Just that...

Having Tomoe and Mio at both of my sides is pretty uncomfortable.

What's personal space? That's how close those two are.

Shiki is right in front of me in true bliss.

And Tomoe and Mio were laid-back at both of my sides.

Honestly, even trying to move is making me nervous.

There's a lot of things I want to say, but it doesn't turn into words properly.

“...The hot spring here is truly transparent.” (Makoto) When speaking of hot springs, there's quite a lot of them that have color.

When I dug it up, I didn't confirm it that much, but this one seems to be transparent and colorless.

“No, it is slightly milky white, but it is a weak color that only shows a bit. In the other places with standing hot springs, there's some with a bit more color you know.” (Tomoe) Tomoe answered me.

I have not heard of standing hot springs though...it is probably a bath you have to enter while standing.

Maybe it is like a deep pool?

“I see.” (Makoto)

“Waka, a lot has happened in these two years, but times like this where we just pass it in a relaxed manner...are truly blissful huh.” (Tomoe) With a gentle smile and kind eyes that are normally not seen on her, Tomoe says this.

When I hear other people say two years, it feels like a long time, but when I look back at it, it feels incredibly short.

“Yeah. These kind of days are not bad every once in awhile. Thanks for everything, Tomoe, Shiki, Mio.” (Makoto) “What are you saying? I stated that I was happy. That’s why there’s no need to say thanks, Waka.” (Tomoe) Being looked straight into my face is, as expected, embarrassing.

It is a distance where our skin touches after all.

Also...it is floating.

I obviously have not entered with my older and younger sister after they matured, so I didn’t know but...

Breasts float when they are big huh...

I could feel blood rushing up my head.

It is no use trying to move, so it is probably a sealed deal that I will end up dizzy.

“That’s right. We are the ones who want to tell you our gratitude all the time. Since the time I met Waka-sama, I have come across many hard to get experiences. Delicious things, fun moments; everything. That’s why, please let me be the one saying: thank you very much, Waka-sama.” (Mio) The head of Mio was placed on my shoulder.

By the way, I thought that I would get dizzy quicker if I were to submerge till my neck, so I wasn’t that deep in.

The shoulder that was outside the hot spring water had Mio’s head on.

Ooooh.

At this rate, it will be terrible in a lot of ways!

“Y-Yeah. Well then, I will go wash my hair. I forgot to wash it after all. Take your time you two...” (Makoto) “Then maybe I should wash your back again. As a follower of yours, please let me do so.” (Tomoe) “T-Then! I will clean your front!” (Mio)

Using my last card I left to escape, I somehow manage to stand up.

But Tomoe and Mio didn't spare any room for me.

Tomoe played the card of washing my back.

Nothing worked on Mio to begin with.

What are you talking about the front?

“Ah.”

The figure of Mio holding her towel as she leaves the hot spring was projected in my eyes.

I unconsciously let out a dumbfounded voice.

Because I was hit directly by it, it can't be helped.

The body of Mio that was wet by the hot spring water...

There's no day where I have cursed my eyesight –that had recovered when I arrived in this parallel world– as much as today.

Thinking this was bad, my retreating back felt a soft sensation.

“Are you okay, Waka?”

It was Tomoe.

Ah, I can't anymore...

“...Fuh...”

A mysterious weak voice that even I haven't let out before, was now released.

Strength left my whole body, and at the same time, my consciousness flew somewhere far away.

Shiki, why are you able to enjoy the bath normally?



“It seems we went too far messing around with him huh. Fufu, what an innocent one-ja.” (Tomoe) “...I was not messing around at all though. I really had a lot of fun-desu.” (Mio) “Right. I also had fun-ja. Everything I told Waka was the truth after all. The messing around was only on the part about washing his back-ja. But Mio, it is slightly surprising that there was no wickedness when you said you would be cleaning his front-ja zo.” (Tomoe) “Uh...that’s because...” (Mio)

“However, I didn’t think Waka-sama was so conscious about the mixed bath. Isn’t it the normal custom in that other world?” (Shiki) Shiki shifts for Mio who was stuck in her words, and asked Tomoe.

“...In an era long before Waka was born, that is. It seems like men and women don’t really bath together much in hot springs-ja.” (Tomoe) “I see... But even so, it was unexpected for me. Seeing Waka-sama in such a state.” (Shiki) In a room called private changing room, there were three followers surrounding Makoto who is sleeping on a bed with a red face.

But it was not really surrounding, as Mio was sitting on a seat beside the bed and fanning Makoto.

Tomoe and Shiki were standing at the sides of Mio and talking.

“Hoh~, why do you think that, Shiki?” (Tomoe)

“...If Waka-sama really sees us as comrades and family like he always says, he wouldn’t get so agitated, and wouldn’t get dizzy in this manner.” (Shiki) “...Fumu.” (Tomoe)

“Of course, there’s no lies in Waka-sama’s words. Just that, regarding Tomoe-dono and Mio-dono, Waka-sama is...” (Shiki) Shiki stopped his words there.

He was troubled in whether he should say it or not.

“What is it, Shiki? If you are going to say something, say it till the end. That would just leave a bad aftertaste-desu wa.” (Mio) “Yeah, you are right.” (Shiki)

Maybe he resolved himself with Mio's words, Shiki nods.

"Waka-sama is probably properly looking at Tomoe-dono and Mio-dono as members of the opposite sex. That's how I thought." (Shiki) "...Hoh." (Tomoe)

"...Eh?" (Mio)

"The view of being a family is deep, but at the same time, the fact that you are from the opposite sex as well. Waka-sama was probably pretty bewildered there." (Shiki) Shiki makes a wry smile.

A perception that shouldn't be able to coexist existed in him. Just imagining it was troublesome, and when thinking of Makoto, Shiki could only make a wry smile.

"If that's true, that's something to be happy about-ja na." (Tomoe)
"Waka-sama is...at me?" (Mio)

On the other hand, the two who heard of the hypothesis of Shiki, showed a reaction of their own.

Tomoe was aloof, Mio was bright red and muttering.

"Now then, when Waka wakes up, please tell him this, Mio. 'I will go open the hot springs for the other people to use'. There's a lot of people that are waiting expectantly for it after all. If it is a popular one, a free pass for a year will cost two Ryo -no, I am feeling good, so maybe I should leave it at one Ryo~." (Tomoe) Ryo is a currency that is circulated only in Asora. While speaking about the Ryo, Tomoe began moving.

"Ah, Tomoe-dono. Aren't you going to tell Waka-sama about the matter found in the books of Waterfall?" (Shiki) "I will after dinner. In the first place, it wouldn't be good to do something that might dirty you, right after leaving a bath, right?" (Tomoe) "...Right. Then, later." (Shiki)

"Umu." (Tomoe)

"Waka-sama is? ...Really.....?" (Mio)

Tomoe left, but even with that, Mio was still in her own world and hadn't returned.

In the same fanning position, she was happily looking at Makoto.

In this day, the residents of Asora learned of hot springs, and it gained high popularity.

But the ones who tasted the most happiness were probably Mio...and Tomoe.

Chapter 220: The summoned one

“It is not a recalling one, but a summoning one?” (Makoto) “Yes.”

“No doubt about it.”

Shiki and Tomoe nod at my question.

What’s going on?

After I had gotten heavily dizzy in the giant bath-house –I mean, at the demonic mountain’s hot-spring village, everyone had shouted cheers of joy as they enjoyed the completed hot springs, and we returned to Asora.

Ah, it became a play of words.

Leaving that aside, I received an explanation from Tomoe and the others, and I understood it in my own way, and on top of that, thought about it.

“That book said that it was a ritual to return a summoned one to their original world though...” (Makoto) It is one of the books that I was shown a few days ago in the dwelling of the Superior Dragon, Waterfall, living in the Meiris Lake.

Within it, there was information of a ritual that had pretty important details for me.

The requirements were surprisingly severe, and it seemed to be a technique that seemed to only work on me and no one else, so I decided not to use it and show it to Tomoe and the others.

And the report I received from them was something I didn’t understand well.

It seems like it is not a recalling spell but a summoning one.

Truly, what the hell is going on?

“There’s no mistake in that description. We have confirmed it as well. Just that, the description was strangely ornated, and the result after investigating about this ritual and aria that felt like it was disguised, we learned that it was a summoning spell for a different realm.” (Tomoe)
“Moreover, it was a formula that didn’t require the aria, the necessary

tools, catalysts, and the sacrifices. It was a spell formation that was quite different from its description, so we thought we should report it to Waka-sama.” (Shiki) I see.

The first possibility I can think of is a misprint, but it seems like it is not the case this time.

It was in the library of a Superior Dragon after all.

In the first place, Waterfall seemed to be the diligent type, and she did give off the feeling like she was trying to avoid me, but I don't think there's merits for her in deceiving me.

If this were Root, he would pop a cracker and say: 'you got it right!' and bring out a second problem.

The other possibility I can think of is...

“...So it means...that this is a summoning to call someone that can return the summoner to their world?” (Makoto) Why is it that I don't feel that good about this?

“I think it is appropriate to conclude that.” (Tomoe)

“That's how we think as well.” (Shiki)

So this is the right answer huh.

It is also something expected.

Of course, I did suspect that there was the chance the explanation of the ritual was a lie.

We don't have a precedent that has tried out this, so it can't be helped.

Is the ritual itself a lie, or is something coming out from it?

At the very least, there's the chance that something could come out, so Tomoe and Shiki are on guard about that.

If it is something that these two can handle themselves, they would have already summoned it and continued with their investigation after all.

“And so, there's the chance that something bad might come out, so you decided to report it to me first, right?” (Makoto) “That's right.” (Tomoe)

“Yes.” (Shiki)

By the way, the only ones here are Tomoe, Shiki, and I.

It seems like Mio went to prepare savory egg custards for me since I supposedly muttered about that in my sleep.

She seemed to be pretty hyped about it.

I just muttered it, so I don't think she would become like that just because of it. I probably did something else aside from that.

I like savory egg custards, so if she is going to prepare them, I am happy though.

“Yeah. Let me say this first but, if we are to do it, I think something incredibly troublesome will be coming.” (Makoto) “Right.” (Tomoe)

“It is Waka-sama after all.” (Shiki)

What an instant answer.

“...No wait, at that part, shouldn't you at least make it less straight?” (Makoto) “Waka has been picking up trouble as if you have been aiming at them from the beginning after all.” (Tomoe) “There are times when you even surpass the expected worst case scenario. If that was the luck of the world, it wouldn't be a laughing matter.” (Shiki) “C-Calling it the epitome of worst is not a laughing matter either though.” (Makoto) “Fortunately, Waka possesses toughness that can narrowly brush away those problems laughing.” (Tomoe) They are truly saying whatever they want.

Even so, I have a strange luck to draw out the lowest of rates.

I feels like these rates are biased.

There's definitely going to be a moment when something good happens, so I am not hung up on those things every time it happens.

“Well, since you guys say it is a summoning spell, wanna try calling it to see? We could ask about how to return and stuff like that.” (Makoto)

“What should we do about the cost?” (Tomoe)

“The cost huh. Hm... It would be hard to gather one thousand people

unless we pick some in a battlefield somewhere.” (Makoto) The easiest way would be to kidnap people from a place where they are killing each other.

The sacrifices will be dying, so buying slaves for that would not leave a good taste.

Different from soldiers and mercenaries, there are a lot of slaves that don't have the resolve to throw away their lives.

“If it is someone that words can get through, there might not be the need to prepare the sacrifices, but it is practically as if the person itself is requesting it beforehand, so it is possible that we would be angering that person if we don't.” (Shiki) That's true.

It is written that there's the need to prepare it in this way in order to return to your former world, so if there's plans on doing the ritual, there's the need to prepare for it.

“Also, the place to do the ritual is also a problem. Should we do it in Asora, or would it be better to do it outside?” (Shiki) Ah, there's also that.

Since we are doing something big, it might catch the eye of the Goddess.

She has been strangely docile lately, but that doesn't mean she is harmless.

She has a danger level and pain level of a first-class noxious bug.

Just that, it all depends on the indulgence of the other side and if the sacrifices have to be taken, so it would be better to do it in a suitable place.

Or more like, I can't do something like this in Asora.

“If we want to avoid the eyes of third parties, it would be Asora. This place hasn't been found by the Goddess yet. But the sacrifices are the problem.” (Shiki) “Right. But why the need of sacrifices? I want to confirm if other things can be used, so it is the truth that it would give more peace of mind if it is in Asora rather than the outside where there's the chance of someone seeing it.” (Makoto) Because if the matter is related to magic power, I have plenty to throw.

If there's no need for them to be people, then...I can just go to the wasteland and Kaleneon to mass capture mamonos.

If what's clear is that the aria is a simple summoning spell, we can call it and confirm if it is actually a requirement in order to call it to this world.

"...It is not possible to call an existence higher than the Goddess, so if Waka prepares himself, the safest bet would be to try in Asora." (Tomoe) Eh?

Tomoe said something important as if nothing.

My resolve of trying in Asora hardened in an instant.

"An existence higher than the Goddess won't come?" (Makoto)
Repeating her words, I confirm it with Tomoe once more.

I was internally scared that something like that trio of Gods might come out from this.

"The aria itself completes the process of the ritual composition. If someone in this world were to call an existence that surpasses the Goddess, there will definitely be a mechanism in the aria where it would ask for the permission of the Goddess first." (Tomoe) ...I see.

In that case, there's no need to worry about it so much huh.

Since the upper limit is something that's lower than the Goddess.

"Then let's do it in Asora. Just in case, at a place far from the town. We can have Tomoe and Mio protect the two towns." (Makoto) The two of them possess abilities fit for defense, so they are suitable for the job.

"We can have Serwhale protect the sea. Mio can protect the first town, and I would be able to accompany you." (Tomoe) That's unexpected.

Does that mean she is worried about me?

Serwhale and the other sea races have pretty high defensive ability when they have the sea as their backing.

Even if their defensive power is not on the level of Mio, it is certainly true that they can be trusted.

If we were to classify Tomoe in defensive or offensive, it would be more of the defensive type though.

“That’s unexpected. Is it because you have investigated it, so you want to witness it until the end?” (Makoto) “...Something like that.” (Tomoe)

“Understood. It seems like my help will be needed if anything happens, so you being there will make things easier.” (Makoto) “Yeah, leave it to me.” (Tomoe)

“Shiki, how much can you prepare?” (Makoto)

“We have already done the necessary preparations, so the only thing that’s left is to do the aria. We have done the preparations in a place far away from the town, so it will take us time to move there though.” (Shiki)
“As expected of you guys. There wasn’t the need of me asking.” (Makoto)
They have already done the preparations.

With how things went, they probably prepared one outside as well just in case.

My respects.



There’s an ominous gate right in front of me that I would agree if it were called the Hell’s Gate.

I don’t know about the material it is made of, but it looks bony.

It is a double door, and at the top of the gate, an expressionless face is placed there.

The height is that of a 2 story building.

In other words, it is pretty big.

“In a sense, this is pretty easy to understand. I can see it as a gate to move between worlds.” (Makoto) “That’s exactly what it looks like.” (Tomoe)

I got the agreement of Tomoe.

But well, it is not like anything will change with that.

There's no followers of mine that would say this is of good taste, or that this is a fresh look for a gate, so I know that nothing will change much even if I got the response of someone.

We are currently at a wide grass-covered plain no race is living in.

This kind of place can be found in many parts of Asora.

We can even make explosion SFX scenes here.

"But since it has responded to the call, this is most likely a gate with a will. We can't let our guards down." (Shiki) Shiki is serious.

Even without being told, with a gate like this, even I wouldn't let my guard down.

"...This is the first time I have come to this place. It is a world that's different from any of the worlds that have spread my spell formation. But..." (???) Okay. I can clearly understand what he is saying.

Let's question him.

"Nice to meet you. I am the one that called you here." (Makoto) "A mortal huh. Also...an undead, and a dragon. No, it is vaguely different. Mutated ones? Doesn't seem to be the case. I see, you have received the ruling pact huh."

As I thought, the face at the top is speaking.

It is slightly tiring on my neck, but well, that's fine.

It seems like he is thinking, so maybe I should wait for a bit?

Ah, now that I think about it, I haven't introduced myself.

Raidou -no, it is fine to use my real name.

"My name is Misumi Makoto. The ones here are my followers: Tomoe and Shiki. If it's okay with you, can I hear your name?" (Makoto) "...Samal. But in the first place, for us, there's no point in names. By the way, where are the offerings?" (Samal) Offerings. The thousand lives huh.

It came immediately huh.

"Samal-san, regarding that, why do you require the lives of a thousand?"

(Makoto) “It should have been written that it is necessary in the spell, right? Since we are here face-to-face, your side should have consented to that.” (Samal) “We were told that this was a ritual to return a person, that has been summoned, to their original world. But when we investigated it, the ritual composition was a simple summoning spell, and so, for the sake of learning about it in more detail, we decided to call you here.” (Makoto) He didn’t answer my question, but let’s go in a patient manner here.

At the very least, the presence this fellow gives is less than the one I felt from that Goddess and Athena-sama.

Instead of saying the pressure is weak, it is more like the wave it is giving off is calm. Well, it is something extremely subjective anyways.

“...If I didn’t hear you wrong, it sounded like you said: you called me as a test.” (Salma) “The outline is correct. I thought that it would be an existence we could talk in this way, so I thought negotiations would be possible.” (Makoto) “It seems like I have been heavily underestimated here. But, it seems like there’s enough lives here for one thousand. The quality is pretty good too. It can be covered plenty enough huh.” (Samal) It was able to grasp the numbers of the Asora residents?

If it turns into a fight so soon, I honestly won’t be able to ask him anything.

From what I see, it is probably a special ability.

In that case, it is pointless to ask?

No, it is not like we can’t create a good relationship here.

“I first want to hear if you actually need the sacrifice of a thousand though.” (Makoto) “Why do I need to tell a rascal like you?” (Samal)

Uh, it is the natural haughtiness that’s pretty popular between God-like existences.

I was thinking about suppressing him if he were to rampage, so I might be considered haughty as well though.

I feel a bad atmosphere from my front.

“You...”

“What did you...”

Both of my sides were dyed in a turbulent atmosphere as well.

“I was wondering if it can be resolved with magic power or something like that.” (Makoto) “Magic power? Are you an idiot? What good would come from taking the magic power of others? There’s no way it would serve as a substitute for life, for the souls. A fool that doesn’t understand the machinations of magic power, how was it possible for someone like that to get his hands on the magic formation to call me?” (Samal) “Idiot...”

“Fool...”

I thought that magic power was almighty or something like that, but it seems like it is not.

Sacrifices are already on the realm of the occult, so I thought that magic power which is practically on that same line would work in a lot of things though.

Like the magma pond in Kaleneon.

“Then, are the life of mamonos and plants counted as well?” (Makoto) “...You have no saving. If it is not souls with strong desires, there’s no point. In other words, it has to be mortals, or a life that is closely related to mortals. Barely scraping would be until beast races.” (Samal) “...”

In that case, it would be troublesome to gather them.

Even though Waterfall went through the trouble of showing me this knowledge, it might become a fruitless effort.

If there’s the need of sacrifices in order for Samal-san to show his power, I would need a thousand lives in order to go back and fro.

It is not a realistic thing to do.

“From what I see, you are quite the novelty. And it is not the first time I have met this presence.” (Samal) He is someone I know?

I haven’t had any experiences with speaking gates in my whole life.

I have gotten used to speaking with a lot of things, but if it were in my time in Japan, it would be at a level to leave a trauma.

It is a matter of course since an eerie gate that can speak would come out from who knows where after all.

“No, I think this is our first time meeting.” (Makoto)

“Well then, I am not so free you see. I will overlook the deficiency of sacrifices. I will gather them from the vicinity and end it there. But Misumi Makoto, I won’t be cooperating with you. You didn’t compel with the contract after all. Be grateful that I didn’t punish you at the very least.” (Samal) “That would trouble me. I can’t overlook that.” (Makoto)

“...You bastard, even after carefreely calling a deity like me, you will obstruct my actions that came from your own inadequacy? Ritual, contract, agreement; get that into your head.” (Samal) It was a God?

It is my first time hearing the name Samal.

No idea what myth this God is from.

If it is a myth that’s not from Earth, I wouldn’t know in the first place.

“I just thought about negotiating the goods that we would be contributing from both sides.” (Makoto) “Recall in exchange for sacrifices. Isn’t that pretty clear?” (Samal) “The information about the recall is practically shrouded in darkness. Then wouldn’t it be obvious that we would want to ask about the thousand sacrifices as well?” (Makoto) “Then don’t perform the ritual in the first place. ‘Ask and you will be answered’, a naive thinking like that doesn’t even work in the society of mankind either.” (Samal) Uh.

Well, I do think it is the responsibility of both sides to read the agreements of the contract.

But a part of the utilization in the goods is completely dark, so it can’t be helped you know.

If it were the export of a top-secret military weapon, it would be one thing. Maybe teleporting between worlds...is a pretty incredible technique?

Even so, having a thousand gulped in a black box is just...

Yeah.

The sound-looking argument of the gate is harsh.

“Waka, doesn’t seem like the other party wants to talk. I think it would be better to have him fix his attitude first.” (Tomoe) Tomoe, is that something you say while unsheathing your katana?

“Waka-sama, it is unproductive to keep company to something like a speaking gate. Don’t worry, I will show you that we can get the information Waka-sama wants even if he is wreck.” (Shiki) Shiki, you are talking as if destroying it is already settled.

“So you can’t even discipline your retainers huh. Makoto, truly a foolish...hm? I see, it is you.” (Samal) The gaze of Samal-san was in Tomoe and Shiki, and then returns to me.

What is it?

“I remember now. It was at the time when I was summoned before. It was a request from a certain Goddess, if I remember correctly, it was... right, a hyuman. She asked me to help out in bringing two failures of humans called ‘hyuman’ to the original world.” (Samal) ?

Two hyumans?

“You are the child of those two, right? So that’s why you had a presence I found familiar. Hmph, I see. That Goddess really likes playing around with dolls, but...” (Samal) ...

A despising gaze incomparable to any he gave before was poured down on me.

The child of those two?

Is he referring to my mom and dad?

Hey, does that mean...

“Even the peasant disposition is inherited huh. Trying to bend the vow in a ritual after the deal, that’s truly the thought of a failure.” (Samal) “...”

He knows about the moment when mom and dad transferred worlds.

Also, did he say peasant?

It didn't feel like it was a word directed only at me.

That means...

"If you have inherited the blood of the residents of that distorted world, it is a given that your brain is lacking huh. That Goddess, in the end, she send those two to the most harshest of worlds with the lowest survival rate –the Origin world. I didn't care about who and where I send them, so I didn't say anything though. A God is a guest of honor that's better than souls after all. Umu, those two abandoned the world they were born in, went against God, and were single-mindedly pushing their own way of thinking. Truly hyuman-like." (Samal) "..."

I could tell that Samal –this gate– is talking thrash about my parents.

Of course, it felt like he was also insulting the Goddess as well...but even so, this guy, speaking whatever it wants about mom and dad...

"I see, I see. So you are the one the Goddess said? That matter about taking away something important of them one day. Meaning, you were the pawn that was being raised by those parents in order to throw away?!" (Samal) "...Shut up." (Makoto)

My words leaked out.

"That's funny. A person that is running an errand for that Goddess, in a place like this, has tried to haggle regarding the sacrifices and is trying to cling onto me? After being thrown away by your blood parents, you still want to meet them? How effeminate." (Samal) ...Shut up.

Shut up Shut upShut up Shut upShut up Shut up!!

Who clung onto you?!

I only had some questions.

Someone like you that insults my mom and dad, I would definitely not rely on someone like that!!

I could tell that my body was being wrapped up by a peculiar sensation I have felt a number of times before, along with an intense anger.

My face was burning, and I could feel my head and body growing rapidly colder.

Ah, I see.

I am someone that can't take abusive remarks towards my family huh.

My boiling point might have gotten even lower since I haven't been able to meet them.

But this is already... This guy is just...

"I told you to shut up." (Makoto)

"Do you wish to be counted in those thousand, you foolish son of mortals?" (Samal) "You have a big mouth for a fake God that only talks about wanting thousand lives without even saying the reason." (Makoto) I have already stopped looking at his face, and spat those words facing the ground.

This guy is unforgivable in a Goddess-class.

I will crush him.

Shiki said that it is okay to wreck him.

"...Fine. Become the first sacrifice along with your retainers. Consider it an honor that you are able to become the stairs of mine." (Samal) "Tomoe, barrier." (Makoto)

"Already done." (Tomoe)

"No. The one already out is fine. Put enough spirit so that this guy won't be able to escape. Understood?" (Makoto) "...Y-Yes." (Tomoe)

Tomoe stuttered in her words a bit, but she complied.

Okay.

I definitely won't let him escape.

"Shiki." (Makoto)

“Yes?!” (Shiki)

Why are you scared?

“You can go wild as a test for the rings. Try not to get dragged in it as well though.” (Makoto) He told me before that there are still rings he can’t use properly.

“‘Try not to get dragged’? Don’t you mean ‘try not getting me dragged’?” (Shiki) “It is exactly as I said.” (Makoto)

“U-Understood!” (Shiki)

I don’t think he will get a turn though.

I will be crushing this Omaru. Or was it Samal?

Who cares whichever it is.

It is a mere gate with an occult design.

It would be one thing if he called me an errand boy of the Goddess, but to go and insult mom and dad.

Don’t go dying until I kill you a thousand times over.

Chapter 221: The small details don't matter

The gate opened.

A richly colored marbled pattern that was not kind to the eyes and a strange space was in sight.

And so what?

Without caring about it, I held up my left hand.

I create arrows with magic power in a manner that it surrounds the gate, and shoot them.

The target is big, so there's no need to aim.

Obviously, the arrows hit both the strange space and the gate.

“Not only are you big, you can't move either? For someone that was talking all high-and-mighty, you are—Otto.” (Makoto) My arrows were returned.

The ones that hit the marble pattern huh.

Hmph~, so it has that kind of power.

A number of the arrows that hit that strange space had their trajectory deviated.

It is a gate, so it has specialties that even I expected.

It is probably not an individual that can fight much himself.

While brushing away the arrows that were deflected towards me, I observe its form.

I don't need to worry about Tomoe and Shiki.

The two shouldn't have problems in their self-defence.

And at this moment, those kind of things are of no matter.

“You are quite the sturdy gate.” (Makoto)

“This makes me question your sanity, Misumi Makoto. You, do you really intend to fight me?” (Samal) The gate didn’t have a single wound.

“Fight? No way.” (Makoto)

“Then what was that preemptive strike just now.” (Samal)

“Ah, that wasn’t what I meant. It will probably not even be counted as a fight. That’s how I thought.” (Makoto) My thoughts sinking into deeper cold was pleasant.

The confusion I felt in the past fight with Io was not present here and was all disappearing in this occasion.

I look at my enemy, do my next action, and then defeat it.

“Insolence, arrogance; you are the very representation of that. Truly foolish.” (Samal) Hm?

Something came out from Samal.

A mamono?

“You can’t even fight yourself? Who’s the foolish one here?” (Makoto) Strange-looking things came out in succession from the gate.

But...every single one was weak.

It is on the level of the weakest top in the wasteland.

If it’s a number of them, Toa’s party would be able to deal with them without any problems.

Well, there’s already tens of them coming out from the gate, so a normal town would be destroyed.

But this is Asora, and the ones here are not adventurers but us.

We are not in a normal town at all, so this supposition is totally pointless.

I will shoot them all to death.

For some mysterious reason, I knew where to shoot them in order to kill them.

When I thought this was easy game...

“...Shiki huh.” (Makoto)

“I do think I have stepped in unnecessarily.” (Shiki)

“...No.” (Makoto)

I was planning on headshotting every one of them, but those guys suddenly began falling on their own.

I soon understood the reason why.

Shiki's ring.

The activation of Niflheim that can be used in a wide scale.

If used while holding back, it can be restrained to only weakening, but if there's no holding back, it can dry up life itself.

There's differences between individuals, but the mamonos that were trying to attack us were being wiped out without exception.

“So you at least possess the power to summon me huh.” (Samal)

There was still composure in the words of Samal.

Well, they are coming out without any signs of stopping, so he is probably trying to push through with numbers.

From within the group, there were humanoid shaped ones, Elf and Dwarf-looking people, and armed human-like ones too.

Humans are a pretty rare race to begin with, so I think it is something resembling them, but that doesn't matter either way.

If they are coming at us, they can just die within Shiki's mist –Niflheim.

If they pass the boundaries of Niflheim, I can just shoot them with arrows.

It is truly a simple method with no need to worry about anything.

That's nice.

Well then, let's aim well this time.

“Bow? What an unfitting thing to use from the many choices you had for a weapon.” (Samal) “...You are really good at irritating me. Almost like the Goddess.” (Makoto) Taking my stance with Azusa, I heard the words of Samal.

Seriously, I feel like I am doing a rehearsal for the time when I actually fight the Goddess.

Thinking about silencing him a bit, I aim at the masked part and concentrate.

And just like that, I shot.

“!!”

My arrows, that have become progressively faster since coming to this world, hit his mask and pierced through it.

It is not as if the strength was proportional to the speed, but it is not a problem even if it is fast.

It is actually welcoming.

A big hole was made right in the center of the mask and broke.

“Like I said, be a bit more quiet.” (Makoto)

I speak to the mask that was regenerating at high speed as if trying to cover up the damage.

While at it, I shoot several shots at the frames.

Every single one was able to gouge out Samal, but all were healed.

Does he have better stats in other points to compensate for not being able to move?

Then I have to find the vital points.

I lower Azusa for now and activate [Sakai], at the same time, I concentrate and observe Samal.

“...Oh. You have one interesting hidden card.” (Makoto)

“Perish.” (Samal)

While I was doing that, I felt honest surprise at what came out from the opened gate.

This is kind of...interesting.

“Well, you move from world to world, so it is a given that you will pick up a lot of things from various places huh. You seem to be specialized in that after all.” (Makoto) The mamonos and the other random things that are coming out don't seem to have uniformity.

I strangely don't feel scared.

That's because I could tell it wasn't a threat for me.

I think it is a missile.

I don't know the specific warhead though.

For some reason, I was sure of it: this isn't something that can kill me.

At the same time as Samal spoke, a gigantic and blue something that can only be called a weapon came out at a close range of several tens of metres and was directed at me.

Of course, I already had a number of methods to stop it.

“...This time it is Tomoe huh.” (Makoto)

“It may be of no concern, but this isn't something that I can just spectate. Sorry for intruding.” (Tomoe) “It is fine.” (Makoto)

Noticing the tactic of Tomoe and confirming it, she readily admitted about intruding.

The several missiles, that were heading directly at us, passed through us, and after advancing for a while, they disappeared like mist.

I was thinking about stopping it with an arm of the Magic Armor though.

“You rascals...Could you be divinities?” (Samal)

Samal was spitting out mamonos continuously, but he has finally noticed the stupidly big mountain of corpses.

Even when they tried to climb over it, they died, and even if they were able to get pass it, they fell and died.

Well, it has become a pseudo-mountain now.

“Divinity? I don’t know about that.” (Makoto)

Shiki’s Niflheim and Tomoe’s Pure Illusory Reality.

Hah...

So this is all it takes?

I don’t know about this divinity he is talking about, but honestly, I don’t have any interest aside from crushing him.

“Fuh...there’s no way. They are all interesting techniques, but if it is just one talent, there’s plenty of people that have gained a technique that has reached the level of divinity.” (Samal) “...Waka, there’s an interference in the surrounding space.” (Tomoe) Before the notification of Tomoe, I had already noticed it.

It wasn’t only from the gate; it seems like he is able to put some tricks in his summonings as well.

So he does have a main method of attack huh.

It wouldn’t do much if the opponent were to notice before the activation though.

“Well done noticing. It is normally hard to even see it; the notorious frenzied dance of weapons. But it is too late even if you notice it now.” (Samal) “I see. The missiles were a lot better than this. So this time it is just an imitation of Sofia?” (Makoto) With one of them appearing behind me as the onset, western and orient weapons of ancient and modern times were appearing in succession at the surroundings.

This spectacle was pretty similar to what the Dragon Slayer Sofia, who had a contract with the Blade Dragon Lancer, showed me once.

The power behind it might be different.

Actually, it might be a different spell altogether.

But there's no way for me to know the details of it.

“Even if you rascals can erase missiles, you won't be able to deal with these swords that have the understanding of experts—?!” (Samal) “A weapon that doesn't have a user; no matter how many there are, there's no point in it. I don't know about this ‘understanding’ you talk about, but an expert that exists is a lot more scary than this. No matter how much performance, no matter what legend these masterpieces come from...their real worth doesn't come out unless it comes in a set with their masters.” (Makoto) And if it's a rehash, that's more the case.

There's 108 –no, 112 huh.

So it wasn't the same number as the worldly desires huh.

So close.

The numbers are not many. I locked them all in my sniping image.

I lift Azusa and take a stance.

The swarm of weapons that are moving simultaneously...

“Disappear.” (Makoto)

“...”

I could tell that Tomoe and Shiki gulped their breath. This is something that happened after I destroyed the hundred or so weapons.

I shot only once.

With my aim on the targets, the light streaks that branched from my hand had pierced them all.

The end.

“...I am a God, you know.” (Samal)

“That's a bluff, right? I know a number of others that are not Gods and are still stronger than you.” (Makoto) “I wouldn't tell lies.” (Samal)

“Then, there are also weak Gods huh.” (Makoto)

I found several candidates for vital spots.

I tried shooting through one of them, located at the lower part.

“?!!”

Haha, the regeneration is clearly slower.

So it really is one huh.

Then, the next one.

“I have lived for long, obtained volition, and obtained the status of God. Just a bit more, and I would have been able to reach further beyond...”

(Samal) Outside frame, from my location, at the left shoulder, 7 centimeters and 2 millimeters in the inner part.

“Too bad then.” (Makoto)

I could feel that Samal was in pain.

There’s definitely damage.

The regeneration is clearly slower than in all the other parts.

The appearance rate of the mamonos and other things has grown slower too.

We have been intercepting them with Shiki’s Niflheim and my sniping, so even if it hadn’t grown slower, there wouldn’t have been any problems at all.

From my point of view, I can’t see the full picture of Samal with all the wreckage and corpses, but there’s no meaning in it.

As long as I know he is there, that’s fine.

“...Something’s strange—?!!” (Samal)

The protuberance at the upper part’s right side of the mask.

That place as well huh.

Maybe all the candidates I found are all correct?

So they are not the type that bring instant death huh. It is a pain that he seems to still be fine.

I shot when he was in the middle of talking, so his words were cut off.

‘Something’s strange?’

Nothing’s strange.

Just what is this guy saying?

“Not really. There’s nothing strange. You are simply unsightly. I wondered about what you would do –being huge and all– but the only thing you did was bring stuff out like the gate you are. Moreover, they were all weak.” (Makoto) Left gate door, top metal fixtures of the handle.

Right gate door, two points at the frame.

I continued piercing them.

“?!!!! Then!! Why are you smiling faintly?! In the middle of a fight!!” (Samal) “So you were still misunderstanding something? Didn’t I say it in the beginning? This is not a fight; this is just trampling.” (Makoto) So I was smiling huh.

There wasn’t anything amusing though.

“...Tomoe, Shiki. Was I smiling?” (Makoto)

“Yeah. This is the first time I saw you like this though.” (Tomoe) “This is also...the first time I see Waka-sama have a faint smile while preparing your bow.” (Shiki) “I see. I wasn’t amused but angry though. I will be careful.” (Makoto) Being conscious of my mouth and my eyes, I bear in mind to keep it emotionless.

If it was unconsciously, it was probably a habit of mine, but it is a strange habit.

Let’s be careful.

This might have been the reason that made Tomoe and Shiki draw back.

“You are saying I am unsightly and weak? I was born as an excelling magic tool! After several hundreds of years, I gained will! Collected souls as an existence that connects worlds! And I was finally able to obtain the status of God! And you are calling someone like me unsightly and weak?!” (Samal) The status of God.

Divinity.

Hah...

So that's what he meant by 'divinities' huh.

I don't know what's the difference between that and a God, but well, that's fine.

In that case, this guy is in short...

"...Heh. Even if you say you are a God, you are just an object that gained will?" (Makoto) "What was that laugh for? You rascal are a simple mortal yourself." (Samal) "And you are about to lose to that mortal. Sorry but, in my perspective, you are not a God, but more of a Youkai. If I had to choose, I would classify you as a mamono." (Makoto) "What insolence." (Samal)

Because you know, when you talk about an object that gained a will, wouldn't that be a Youkai?

In my perspective, he doesn't feel that much of a God.

However, I like the basic idea of a tool obtaining a will after being treasured for a long time or being treated roughly.

That's why I treat my tools with care.

This guy called Samal might have been born from the result of one of those.

I wouldn't think about treasuring this guy at all though.

I would rather break it.

"You are demanding a thousand lives, so classifying you as a monster is plenty enough. You know, after being called a monster a lot of times, you actually get used to it. It isn't as suffocating as being called a God, and in the first place, it suits you." (Makoto) "Unforgivable. I definitely won't forgive you." (Samal)

"Hahaha, what a coincidence. I feel the same way." (Makoto)

From below the mask, 3 millimeters at the contours of the chin region.

“...Fool.” (Samal)

Even though he has been shot to the point of being unable to properly speak, he is still energetic enough to continue his impudent talk.

He is already broken here and there, and he still has the nerves.

“...Could it be...there’s no way.” (Tomoe)

“What’s wrong, Tomoe?” (Makoto)

I heard words of surprise from an unexpected direction.

“This is the space of Waka and I. Even though neither of us has given the permission...there’s no way he would be able to retreat. Is that a special characteristic of this guy?” (Tomoe) “So you intend to run away. So that wasn’t impudent talk but retreating words.” (Makoto) To have him stay here, Tomoe and I had prohibited the exit and entrance of anything.

And yet, from what Tomoe said, it seems like this guy intends to run away.

“There’s no way I will let myself be defeated by a rascal like you. The day I obtain a position worthy for me, I will celebrate it by slaughtering this world along with you all.” (Samal) “Waka, this guy will escape. I can’t stop his interference with the space!” (Tomoe) Is it because he is a God-like existence that’s specialized in space manipulation?

Is there a position higher than that of a God?

It seems like Samal thinks that that position is what’s truly worthy for him, so there’s probably one.

If that’s the case, then maybe there’s some sort of difference between obtaining a spot as a God and actually becoming one?

Just like how he said himself: ‘if it’s only in one talent, there’s already people that can imitate God-class’, so it is not strange for Samal himself to be able to achieve this kind of feats in terms of teleportation.

It would be hard to keep him inside Asora by force or block him from entering.

But hearing Tomoe's agitated and nervous voice is kind of rare.

She cooled me down a bit.

Unnecessary noise has mixed in my mind.

Emotions are an hindrance for my objective of crushing Samal.

Hah...

"I have stored this place in my memories. You, your slaves, your world, and your family that lives in the Origin world; one day, I will definitely—"

(Samal) "I definitely won't let you escape. That's what I have decided."

(Makoto) "?!"

The red colored coat is truly fast and useful as expected.

I was able to cross over the mountain of corpses and arrive at a distance that's close enough to touch Samal.

There's no need to hide it, so I activate the Magic Armor in a visible state and give him a punch as a greeting.

There was a normal response from it.

It wasn't a vital point, so the recovery is fast, but it is not like there's no damage at all.

"That power...you are calling me a monster, but you are the monster."

(Samal) "You called yourself a God, you shouldn't run away from a mere

mortal." (Makoto) "Don't speak any further with that unpleasant

expression of yours, monster." (Samal) "Was I smiling again? It seems like it is indeed a habit. Sorry about that. Hm?" (Makoto) The feeling of

holding Samal was fading quickly.

So he really plans on escaping.

I thought he would be using that weird space to escape, but when I think about it, that would be strange.

He is a gate that's opened to other places, and for Samal himself to enter those doors would be contrary to its function.

Because Samal himself is the gate after all.

The whole gate was slowly turning transparent.

At the same time, Samal's presence grows thinner.

"Not only me, you are even planning on putting your hands on my family and comrades; do you think I will let someone like that escape?" (Makoto) If that's so, he is an incredible idiot.

I have already taken away the lives of many.

I am prepared for the retribution this might bring to me and my surroundings.

But I definitely am not going to shut my eyes and wait for it to happen.

Of course, this moment enters that category.

"Even if you won't allow me to leave, there's nothing you can do. In the space I live where distance and time don't exist, you think you would be able to catch me? You would need at least deep knowledge in space manipulation. You don't have what's required to call me to begin with. Farewell." (Samal) Samal, who was practically transparent already, said his parting words.

The Magic Armor can't hold Samal's body anymore.

Then I will use Sakai.

Attacks won't come from Samal anymore.

Or more like, he is practically gone already.

I search for the traces of Samal's being... and find it.

"I told you...I won't let you escape." (Makoto)

I found a space opening in the place where Samal was.

I could see that it was closing in an unshapely manner like when one stitches a wound.

It was returning to its former state, and the space was already mending itself.

I call the arms that I was thinking about utilizing to transporting the

magma.

Just like I imagined, the two arms appeared at both of my sides.

I didn't really ask anyone to give them maintenance, but they are giving off a dazzling shine with no blemish.

"Waka, he is already..." (Tomoe)

"I don't think it is too late. That's why, just stay there and watch."
(Makoto) Tomoe brings out words notifying that Samal has left Asora already.

But I didn't think like that at all.

'It is still fine', me and my power were thinking that.

I thrust the silver arms into the wound in the space.

The arms that had thrust into the rift were fighting against the space that was trying to return to its former self, and they tremble as they forcefully try to tear it apart.

"Could it be, you found the traces of where he escaped..." (Tomoe) "And you are going to chase after him?" (Shiki)

Tomoe and Shiki predict my next move from the spectacle they are viewing.

Wrong.

I don't have the intention of chasing him no matter where he goes.

I am simply going to drag him back here -to Asora.

The space opening is slowly tearing up.

"...Now then, you can do it, right? Crush any kind of attacks; that's what I envisioned in you when I created you. If you are truly my Creation, you should be able to rip up this closed space." (Makoto) As if being influenced by my will, the arms grow much stronger and the space is cracked in an unnatural manner.

The silver arms' power to open up the wound of the space was stronger than the space's healing power.

“It opened.” (Shiki)

Shiki dumbfoundedly voices out the reality.

The silver arms steadily increase in power and have overwhelmed the resistance of a different space.

In the place that has been teared up, there was a marble space similar to the one inside of Samal’s gate.

Is the space between worlds something like this?

If the words of Samal are true, the humans that fall in here would be transported to a world somewhere, or die just like that.

I haven’t seen a place like this even when I use the mist as an intermediary to go back and forth between Asora and the Goddess’ world.

“...Waka, will you chase after that fellow, and...return to your homeland? If you make that fellow abide to your will, it is possible.” (Tomoe) “...Have Samal abide to my will? Hell no. I don’t want to breath the same air as him. Also, if I were to make him abide to my will, that would mean I would have to do a pact like the time with Tomoe and the others, right? Even if I were to put a difference in treatment... Something like that, I refuse.”

(Makoto) “But...you have lingering feelings for your homeland, right?”

(Tomoe) “What’s wrong, Tomoe? It is true that I want to return to Japan. However...I currently have you guys with me. Even if I were able to return to Japan, if I am unable to return to this place, there’s no point in choosing that. It would be irritating to get meddled by Bug, and there’s a mountain of things I want to tell her.” (Makoto) “Waka...” (Tomoe)

“After I finish all of my business with the Goddess, and all those requirements are fulfilled, I will return to Japan. However, I will be together with you guys, forever. At least as long as you guys wish for my company, I will forever be there. That’s why, even if it’s possible at this moment, I still won’t return.” (Makoto) “...”

Even though I feel like I said something pretty cool there, the two didn’t give me any reactions and that makes me feel a bit embarrassed.

This Tomoe is throwing cold water in my adrenaline; a while ago she did

it and now she does it again.

Even though Samal pissed me off, I am unable to return to that pleasant sensation from before.

I am simply pissed off right now.

What a waste.

I will crush, destroy, kill Samal.

Because of these clear objectives, I was able to brush away all the things inside my head. A simple and pleasant state of mind has gone far away now.

This exhilarating mood inside my body that allowed me to move for those objectives, for some reason, is no longer there.

How to say it, I am closer to my normal self.

...Eh?

Or more like, why did I want to crush Samal?

Hm...right.

He insulted my mom and dad.

That's why I was angry.

To think I forgot the reason. What's wrong with me?

"...Well then, what are you going to do now?" (Shiki)

Shiki.

The first one to recover from this frozen atmosphere was Shiki.

"Simple. I will drag Samal here." (Makoto)

What I am about to do doesn't change much from before.

"H-How?!" (Shiki)

I thrust my arm into the marble space that was opened widely.

"W-Waka! What are you doing?!" (Tomoe)

"Putting your arm into the space rift?!" (Shiki)

Is that something to be so surprised about?

It was an opponent that I shot a lot a few moments ago, and I thought that this is the way I should do it though.

See?

“There he is. As I thought, I can really do it, see?” (Makoto) ““There’, you say?” (Shiki)

“Waka, what you are plunging your arm into...is totally the domain of your opponent, and an unknown domain to top it off.” (Tomoe) “When he said he wouldn’t let Samal escape, did he mean...” (Shiki) Found a response.

A fission.

I only thrust my right arm, but I thrust my left arm as well and grab the handle of the door with both of them.

And then, since I am going to drag him here, I pulled with all my power.

“Didn’t I tell you?!!!” (Makoto)

A tattered gate was coming out from the marble space, and maybe because I did it with brute force, the moment I let go my hands, he flew into the sky.

“Eh!! A hand suddenly...what is going on? You...Misumi Makoto!!” (Samal) “Welcome back, Samal.” (Makoto)

The space opening that was no longer needed, closed up in an instant.

In other words, the silver arms are free for use again.

Arms that I can move at will.

Samal is doing a trip in the sky, so me and my Magic Armor can’t reach that far.

But if it’s these arms...it is possible.

“You rascal!!!” (Samal)

The gate of Samal opened completely.

From there, several thick lights that reminded me of the blaze of Root were shot.

Even in his suffering state, he still comes out with an imitation, moreover, even in the end, it is still another inferior version.

I receive all those lights with my Magic Armor.

Not only did I not receive any injuries, there wasn't even the need to reform my Magic Armor.

"The power was in its perfect state and it was practically with no aria!! All of these attacks should have been a first for you; they were all techniques and spells from a world that's no more!!" (Samal) "I am already used to spells with no arias, and I have already experienced practically all of this before. Not only are you a Youkai, you are even a copycat." (Makoto) "Dragging back someone that has already transferred into its space. That's just...impossible!! Impossible!!" (Samal) "Now then, just punching you would be pitiful, so... A rush attack with the silver arms -no, I name it: [Silver Rush]." (Makoto) "Waka's naming sense is just..." (Tomoe)

"Waka-sama, I think it would be less pitiful if you were to just punch him." (Shiki) "Then Silver Rush is the best choice. Go! Punch him! And while at it, gouge him out!" (Makoto) Even when I try to lift up my spirits, I am still unable to enter the pleasant mood I had before the cooling down of Tomoe.

The arms flew into the air and chased after Samal.

And then, the moment they caught their target, they immediately began to punch.

Without caring much about the vitals, I simply punch him single-mindedly.

With how he is regenerating, the end will probably be very far.

Well, I will make the process a bit faster.

"While at it...here" (Makoto)

“...What is it this time?” (Shiki)

Shiki, who for some reason really drawn back, asked me.

Tomoe looked at the sky with a stiffened expression.

“Eh, it would be lukewarm if I just beat him to death, so I thought about shooting him to death too.” (Makoto) “...What you have in your hand is a Draupnir, right? The one that was going to be disposed and was given to you by Ema and the Elder.” (Shiki) “Yeah. You know, a Brid with a ring mixed in it, I actually haven’t seen its power with my own eyes. Isn’t this a good chance?” (Makoto) “That’s true. He seems to be a sturdy opponent after all.” (Shiki) “Right. Shiki, go to Ema and bring back more rings that are planned to be disposed.” (Makoto) “Y-Yes.” (Shiki)

For now, I place the ten rings that I had in my possession, on top of my palm.

I deploy the same number of Brides in my surroundings, which have been improved to have their power and precision as their highest priority.

This is a pitiful spell that everyone said is no longer a Brid, but I like it.

At first, they appear in a spherical shape, and as if being pulled from behind, they slowly take the form of arrows.

And when the Brides get sharp enough, they become spiral shaped.

Yeah.

Confirming that they are now in standby state, I correct the aim to Samal as I place one ring inside all of them.

“First, let’s go with the one’s that only have one inside. Ready...Shoot! (lol)” (Makoto) All Brides were fired.

They impacted on Samal, who was still being punched, and exploded.

Oooh.

The power increases by quite a lot.

Ah, by the way, even when that happened, the arms were still punching him without sparing a single moment.

He still maintains his form, so his sturdiness and recovery power is quite the thing.

“Waka-sama, I have brought them.” (Shiki)

What Shiki carried in his arms was a big and stylish jewel box.

It was completely filled with bright red rings.

“The projectiles are all in place.” (Makoto)

While pouring Samal with a gatling of Brids without any interval to spare him...

“Now then, let’s try mixing two this time.” (Makoto)

I deliberately avoided the vital points, and let him use his regenerative powers to his full extent... as I continue to trample him.



“I have begun thinking from the bottom of my heart that I should keep my teasing of Waka in moderation. Honestly, what happened just now has cooled down my spirits.” (Tomoe) “It is impressive that you still think about moderately teasing him, Tomoe-dono.” (Shiki) “Punching him nonstop from above, and shooting him nonstop from below. Well, he said that Azusa would be dirtied, so he didn’t use his bow anymore though.” (Tomoe) “In the end, Samal wasn’t even allowed to fall at all.” (Shiki) “There were several moments when he tried to summon something. I don’t know if he was successful or not, but it is certain that it didn’t change the situation one bit-ja. Regarding the altitude, not only was he not falling, I think it was actually increasing.” (Tomoe) “Leaving aside this trivial talk, I certainly did feel that Samal possessed an enormous power that surpassed the High Spirits and Root-dono, but was that my misunderstanding?” (Shiki) “I also felt that way. If you and I were to fight him, we definitely wouldn’t have been able to win.” (Tomoe) “If he can return even when in Asora and in the presence of Tomoe-dono, there’s no way to chase him down. If what he brought out were only at that level, we wouldn’t have lost, is how I thought though.” (Shiki) Shiki looks back at Makoto’s fight –no, at his trampling.

The attacking method of Samal by summoning, in the eyes of Shiki, that was something that had plenty of ways to deal with.

Shiki has begun to master the 13th steps, so he felt like there was plenty room to win.

“The missiles did give me a fright though. If we didn’t erase them and received them directly... Waka estimated that he would be able to take them on, but for you and me, it would be a bit rough.” (Tomoe) “Missiles. The ones that Tomoe-dono changed to illusions? I could see that Waka-sama was feeling slightly happy when that happened.” (Shiki) “Because they were similar to the weapons that are in Waka’s world after all. He probably felt familiarity in that shape.” (Tomoe) “They have enough power to make Tomoe-dono wary?” (Shiki)

“It is a troublesome warhead. Samal didn’t have to hold back against us, so that much is a given though.” (Tomoe) Tomoe glances at a part of the floor.

At that place, there was a normal house door lying down.

What was once Samal.

“There’s already no former shadow of him.” (Shiki)

“An object that has gained a will. A tool that has been utilized for a long time, gained a will, and transformed huh. It is second-hand knowledge from the legends in Waka’s world though. What a mysterious existence-ja no. I didn’t know about this either.” (Tomoe) “It is most likely something that doesn’t exist in this world. I have never heard of it either.” (Shiki) After Makoto’s trampling was over, Samal returned to the ground by the hands of the Silver Arm.

Being escorted to the ground by a pound, Samal had already lost his form as a door.

Tomoe and Shiki who thought that it would be destroyed at that rate, thought it strange that Makoto stopped his attacks and approached Samal.

And then, they saw a part of Makoto that they haven’t seen before.

Makoto told Samal: 'Killing you would be the end of it, and that would only bring you peace'.

That's why he stopped.

"'You have worked hard and gotten this far, isn't that fine already?', is what he said huh." (Shiki) "Yeah. Obtaining souls by using contracts, he strengthened his own self; to be able to gouge out that power by the root, Waka was skilfull beyond expectations." (Tomoe) "In the end, he returned to being a magic tool -no, since he already has a will, the time he regains his consciousness will probably be shorter." (Shiki) "Probably, or probably not. Whichever it is, he is a pitiful one-ja. Not being able to bring out your will is practically torture. My condolences." (Tomoe) Tomoe faces the door and presses her hands together in prayer.

Maybe she felt the need to give her condolences. Shiki follows her lead.

A short silence fell unto the meadows.

"I will bring it to my research room tomorrow. We will have to clean up the corpses as well." (Shiki) The magic tool, Samal, was still capable of thinking, but was unable to voice out, moreover, it has been decided that he will be staying here for a night.

On top of that, from tomorrow on, his days as a guinea pig will start.

He is probably the very definition of: being too pitiful to watch.

"There might be something here that could be useful. There's an extensive amount of races in this place, so let's call for assistance." (Tomoe) "Yes." (Shiki)

There's corpses of people, mamonos, and weapons.

Within the darkness of the night, the eyes of the two that were directed at those corpses lying down, were cold.

"Well then, let's return as well. The savory egg custard of Mio will cool down." (Tomoe) "Right... Tomoe-dono." (Shiki)

After a span of time, Shiki calls Tomoe from the back.

"What-ja?" (Tomoe)

“Isn’t that great? Waka-sama wants to stay in Asora together with us, till the bitter end.” (Shiki) “...Umu.” (Tomoe)

“Honestly speaking, depending on the moves of Samal, I thought that Waka-sama might decide to go back to his world, and...” (Shiki) “‘Never return’?” (Tomoe)

“...Yeah.” (Shiki)

“Idiot.” (Tomoe)

“Sorry.” (Shiki)

Shiki lowers his head slightly.

“Ah~, truly an idiot-ja. Let’s return.” (Tomoe)

Tomoe opens a mist gate.

“But, I am also one-ja...” (Tomoe)

The faint voice of Tomoe reached the ears of Shiki.

By the time he raised his head, his Senpai follower was not there anymore.

Shiki didn’t think of confirming those words of hers.

He simply had a gentle smile on his face as he chases after her.

Tomoe and Shiki return to their residence in relief.

Makoto doesn’t plan on going back to Japan right now.

His smile when angered is dangerous.

The two, who learned something more important than the recall spell formation, felt like this day had big worth.

Chapter 222: Shrine of Gods

I overdid it there, but I don't regret it.

It is a phrase that is normally seen in newspapers and weekly magazines.

But I didn't think that the day I thought this would be when I am in a parallel world.

Now that I think back on the day Samal was summoned, there were other ways to deal with the situation that would have been more beneficial.

Thinking about it in advantages and disadvantages, I chose a disadvantageous one.

Samal returned to his original tool form, and is now in the laboratory of Shiki.

There's the need to research a lot in order to be able to utilize the powers of that tool, and it will take time and personnel.

In essence, I have thrown away my chance to obtain a fast way to return to Japan.

"...But well..." (Makoto)

Looking outside from within my work room, a monologue comes out from my mouth.

As I thought, I don't regret it.

If possible, I want to return to Japan. That's the truth.

But if that means I will have to leave Asora and everyone, my answer is no. I haven't reached any conclusions with the Goddess.

And to endure the insults thrown to my parents in order to return? That would be a no.

I want to return home, but I am probably not that hurried about it.

"Also, I am already learning the customs and the way of acting in this

world. A shitty world huh..." (Makoto) Even so, there are comfortable places similar to Asora and Tsige.

This room that was completely empty, is now decorated by a lot of things that the people of Asora gave me. I also received books recommended by Rembrandt-san and representative Zara, and also from my teacher colleagues. Right now, it even feels like this room is a bit cramped.

Even if it's a world that's ruled by that Goddess, it doesn't mean I have to hate everything.

As a whole...I like about 5% of it.

Not 50%, but 5%, so it doesn't change my opinion that I hate almost everything.

"Fuh~. Now that I think about it, in Japan, it is almost the season for plums. When that passes, it will be the season for the cherry blossoms. I think cherry blossom viewing is an event that Tomoe would be happy about." (Makoto) Rapum blossoms, plum blossoms, and then, cherry blossoms.

When I was in Japan, I always went around every year in March.

I think cherry blossom viewing is the main event in spring.

But in the famous places for cherry blossoms, there's normally food carts lined up and it becomes more of a festival.

That's why, even if my sight remembers the fully bloomed cherry blossoms, in terms of my sense of smell, it wasn't the scent of cherry blossoms, but the floured food and skewered food as well as the scent of alcohol.

Especially in holidays and in the night.

Cherry blossom viewing huh.

If it's cherry blossoms, there are in Asora as well.

When I looked around, I could see that there were a lot of mountain cherries, Kawazu cherry blossoms, and morning cherries.

I am used to seeing weeping cherries and Yoshino cherry trees.

Things like fruits and vegetables that are clearly not the type that grow in the wild, are growing naturally in Asora, but regarding the cherry blossoms, I haven't seen if they are the horticulture type.

The possibility is not zero. The one that has the highest worth in seeing is the Yoshino cherry tree, so it wouldn't be a bad idea to look for it.

I personally would like to see the mountain cherries and the weeping cherries, but for a cherry blossom viewing event, it would be best if the ones we first see are the pink and fully blossomed ones.

But it is not like we are growing any cherry blossoms for the sake of viewing.

A place where we can appreciate the cherry blossoms and are growing in numbers huh.

Is there one?

If it's the mountains, I can ask the animals in the mountains if they know.

Okay.

The faster the better. Let's try looking now.

"It would be nice if it's in a nice place in the mountains...eh?" (Makoto)
Asora has...expanded.

I haven't done anything.

There's been many cases when Asora expands by reacting to my magic power.

They happen mostly when I am sleeping.

In that case, this time is because...I defeated Samal?

I did use quite a lot of magic power and I tried summoning the arms.

I was a bit angered there, but...in terms of magic power, there are a number of possibilities I can think of.

“But this is a bit strange. I feel like the scale is pretty big.” (Makoto) The expansion was bigger compared to the others.

The land that we are using in Asora is comparable to how much land a base takes in the wasteland.

In other words, most of the land here is not used.

Even if the residents here have surpassed the thousands in total, there's also the races that live in the sea.

This is just an approximate feeling, but the current vastness of Asora might be the same as the part of the Goddess' world that is currently known.

But we don't even have a country. The most we have are two towns and a few villages.

We totally have too much to manage.

At first, it was as if we were creating a town in a miniature garden, and yet, by the time I noticed, the miniature garden had transformed into a savannah. That's how it felt.

The expansion this time feels slightly different from before.

I use [Sakai] and investigate the land that has expanded.

The new land was obviously created at the edges of Asora, so I am looking at Asora as a whole.

When [Sakai] is too wide, it is impossible to use it to check details.

Right now, it is fine if I can tell if it's mountains, valleys, plains, lakes, or a sea.

With my previous experiences as reference, it has probably expanded 100 kilometers in every direction.

If that's the case, this is quite the large scale.

“...Hey, you are kidding, right?” (Makoto)

As soon as I began investigating, I found something unbelievable.

I could tell my face had stiffened.

Asora itself is an outrageous place, but as expected, this is something I can't believe immediately.

In a sense, it was the same as when I learned about the sea, or maybe I am feeling even more surprise than that time.

Ah, the same as with the sea...

That means...

One possibility came to mind.

"Waka!!!"

Right at that moment, Tomoe rushed into my room without knocking.
...From the window.

Well, you wouldn't be able to knock if you enter from there huh.

Anyways, there's no doubt she is incredibly agitated.

"Tomoe, please enter properly from the entrance. This is bad for my heart." (Makoto) "Running through the corridors is a waste of time! Right now, Asora is...right now it is...!!" (Tomoe) "Calm down. I understand... probably." (Makoto)

"W-Waka, why are you so calm?! This is of utmost importance you know?!" (Tomoe) "How to say it, I was surprised, but someone who was even more agitated than me came to my room. Came in with a 'Bam' you see. Well, when the sea appeared, it was pretty surprising too." (Makoto) It is also because I have an idea of what's going on.

Tomoe is agitated to the point that it is amusing.

It is probably because she knows Asora the most, and since she knows a lot about space magic to begin with, she ended up like this.

"When the sea appeared, I was at least able to narrowly understand! But this time, this is definitely impossible! If the formation of Asora is made possible by Waka and I, this is definitely impossible!!" (Tomoe) "Well, you are right. Hey Tomoe, leaving aside if it's a phenomenon we can

understand or not, you understand that there are times when Asora changes completely even without us being involved in it, right? Like the time with the sea.” (Makoto) “Regarding the miracle from that God of another world, well, yeah.” (Tomoe) “Isn’t this time the same? He did say there would be more after all.” (Makoto) “Waka... but...” (Tomoe)

“Let’s go investigate immediately. We shouldn’t agitate ourselves thinking about the possibilities of what happened, and simply accept them as something that has already happened. You see, lately, I have been feeling that there are things in society that are just pointless to think about.” (Makoto) In the first place, I feel like living your life thinking in probabilities and rationale would be tiring.

In my case, the chances of me being transferred to another world has several zeros lined up, and yet, here I am.

“...Is that an enlightenment?” (Tomoe)

Tomoe seemed like she was impressed, and at the same time, seemed to be worried as well; she had a complicated expression as she looked at me seriously.

That’s definitely not the case.

“Nope, it is an ‘I don’t care anymore’. I have learned that a lot can happen in life. So I decided to give up and accept the unreasonable and irrational points. In a positive way, that is.” (Makoto) “To give up... Giving up in a positive way is a splendid conduct. Fumu.” (Tomoe) “I won’t question what you have comprehended, but, you are going to the investigation too, right Tomoe?” (Makoto) “Of course, I will accompany you. After all, in that place, there is...” (Tomoe) “Yeah...” (Makoto)

“A manmade object after all.” (Tomoe)

“A manmade object.” (Makoto)

The voice of Tomoe and I overlapped.



In the end, aside from me and Tomoe, Mio and Shiki joined us in the

investigation.

All the followers.

I was thinking about searching for cherry blossoms, but it has been substituted by a long journey of repeating teleportations for around 30 minutes.

Because it was in a direction that has expanded and hasn't been explored, we matched the pace of Shiki who's the one that's the least skilled in teleportation, and it ended up taking 30 minutes.

There's no doubt that this is more like going out to a picnic for us, but for Shiki, it seemed to be pretty rough.

Well, we have arrived close to the location and the manmade object is in sight, so taking into account his recovery, we walk towards the objective.

"You really are unskilled in teleportation as always-ja na." (Tomoe) Tomoe makes an amazed expression at Shiki who has a dead pale face as he walks and breathes roughly.

"Even though we were teleporting so slowly, you still end up like this." (Mio) Mio didn't make things easier for him.

Not only that, she went and comboed him.

The breathing of these two is still normal, and they don't seem like they are in any pain.

I am also the same. Only Shiki is incredibly tired.

Even when I am sending him magic power and accelerating his recovery, he still looks like he is in pain.

"My apologies. It has been a while since I have done long distance teleportation repeatedly, so my negligence has gotten the better of me." (Shiki) Since the time Shiki grew able to go back and forth between Asora and the outside, he hasn't used long distance teleportation that much.

He is using Asora as an intermediary to jump to a teleportation point.

I am basically doing the same thing as him.

Because that way is easier after all.

There's also the fact that Shiki has not been that good at teleportation to begin with, and the moment he reached a level where he didn't feel any inconvenience, he didn't do much practice in long distance teleportation anymore.

I asked if he could endow a power like that to the rings, but it seems like the power of the rings isn't something he created, but something that was already there. There are no rings that are blank, moreover, there's no rings with teleportation powers.

The power of Shiki that is able to display a variety of abilities had an unexpected pitfall to it.

"If walking is rough, it is fine to take a rest for a bit, you know."
(Makoto) "No, I am...fine. I am receiving your magic power, so...I will recover...in time..." (Shiki) "I see. This is just for reference but, just how tired are you feeling right now?" (Makoto) He looks like he is in pain, and yet, his walking seemed to be fine, so I tried asking out of curiosity.

Well, the eyes of Shiki are blazing with curiosity at the thing that we are heading to, so he will probably forgive me for asking this.

Curiosity is greatness.

Because even though we told Shiki that it was far, he was adamant in going.

"For example...I feel like, I have...run for...30 minutes...at full-throttle."
(Shiki) "Ah, I see." (Makoto)

You would die from that.

I can't imagine doing a 30 minute run in full-throttle.

In the first place, is space teleportation something that comes with physical exhaustion?

My breathing has not been disarrayed in any of the instances I used teleportation though.

"Why are you boasting about your exhaustion to Waka? Are you an

idiot?” (Mio) “No, Mio. I was the one who asked.” (Makoto)

“No Waka-sama. We matched the pace of Shiki and moved slowly, and yet, the person himself is breathing roughly as he boasts? That’s the very definition of an idiot-desu wa.” (Mio) Shiki is not even boasting to begin with.

His breathing is simply disarrayed and the color of his face is bad, that’s all.

“R-Right, now that I think about it, Mio, is there any sort of physical exhaustion when using the space teleportation spell? It is my first time hearing about that.” (Makoto) Changing the subject, I move the direction away from Shiki.

“Ehm...I have not really felt that. It is on the level that if used correctly, it is okay, I think?” (Mio) You think?

Mio uses magic in an instinctive manner, so it is hard to use her as a reference huh.

At the very least, it seems like she hasn’t felt much exhaustion.

Also, in Mio’s case, her stamina is overwhelming, so it makes it even harder to tell.

“...Don’t go teaching something so half-baked to Waka. Waka, space teleportation magic normally consumes a fit amount of stamina and magic power depending on the distance. Teleporting to and from Asora is a different case though.” (Tomoe) “I see. I haven’t really felt it.” (Makoto)

“Eh...EEEH?!” (Shiki)

Ah, Shiki is looking at me with a face full of despair.

Your ‘eh’ is long.

Oh, I kind of feel like he is drawn back.

“Waka has stamina to begin with, and you always have your crazy body strengthening activated, so there wouldn’t be much point in taking others as reference.” (Tomoe) “Crazy, you say.” (Makoto)

“Sadly, that’s the reality. I don’t think there will be a day when you teach space teleportation magic to others, but if that chance does come, I recommend you to first read some books regarding the subject so you can learn the common sense behind it.” (Tomoe) “...I will. Thanks.” (Makoto)

Why is it?

I tried to do a follow-up for Shiki and change the subject, but now I am the one that ended up depressed.

“The teleport formations reduce the consumption of stamina and magic power, so it is in a range for practical use. ‘Using it skilfull and it will be okay’ like what Mio said is out of question, but it is possible to reduce the stamina consumption by enhancing your body.” (Tomoe) “What, then Shiki can do just that.” (Makoto)

“Waka, Shiki used 4 rings and still ended up like this. That Shiki.” (Tomoe) “...” (Makoto)

Shiki didn’t show any signs of responding to Tomoe’s words and simply continued hanging down his head and walking dejectedly.

Now that I look carefully, he does have the strengthening rings he uses for battle.

Just when did he...

He actually went through all that and still felt like running at full-throttle for 30 minutes.

“Well, with this as a lesson, I don’t know what’s the deal with you not being good at teleportation, but you should train-ja na. What’s the point of a follower if he ends up troubling his master-ja.” (Tomoe) ...

No Tomoe, try saying those words right back at you a few times.

Just a few days ago, you asked things like: ‘Where is the Asuka metropolis?’ and began asking questions of history and archeology that had no relation to samurais and had already surpassed the boundaries of what a high school student would know.

Like hell I would know.

I wanted to say: 'Isn't it somewhere in Nara?'

It seems like the old Nara had a lot of battles, so in that period, it wouldn't have been strange for several Asuka metropolis to have existed in those times of war.

Just how far are you planning on turning back in the history of Japan?

What a fearsome love for Edo.

Even I haven't gone so back, and am not that knowledgeable about it.

If it's events before the Edo period, I probably have a bit more knowledge than normal.

And yet, Tomoe had to get an interest in the troublesome minor warring eras.

At those times, they used to set things on fire a lot, and the loss of historical documents was incredible. Meaning, it is most likely a period shrouded in darkness even for the Japanese.

My knowledge is so small that it can be laughed at.

"Waka?" (Tomoe)

"Hm? Sorry, I was thinking." (Makoto)

"Ah, sorry for interrupting. Was it regarding that building there?"
(Tomoe) Even with all that, Tomoe is always in a good mood.

Especially after this manmade object suddenly appeared in Asora.

There were several buildings.

I have confirmed their appearance with my eyes already.

I have also finished grasping the details of them with [Sakai].

When I try to use magic power for perception, it feels as if that place is an empty space with nothing there.

But when I look at it with the naked eye, or when I use [Sakai] to look at it, it is certainly there.

There might be a special type of barrier placed in it.

It is a place that wouldn't be strange if that were the case.

"Yeah, there's that too." (Makoto)

"Waka-sama, is it okay-desu ka? It has been bothering since a while but, what is that?" (Mio) Mio points straight.

What she is pointing at isn't the buildings that are several kilometers away.

It was a 'gate' that I am used to seeing.

I don't think it is related to Samal though.

It looks like a giant Shinto shrine archway.

There's no way I would mistake that shape, it is certainly a Shinto shrine archway.

From there, it leads to a forest path.

"That's a Shinto shrine archway, Mio." (Makoto)

"Archway?" (Mio)

"As I suspected! That's an archway, Waka?! Wuuh, this is the first time I have seen the real deal-ja! Listen well Mio, that's a gate leading to the residence of a God. You can't cross right in the middle, got it? And after that, you..." (Tomoe) Tomoe is excitedly telling Mio about a variety of manners.

Mio made a face saying: 'I messed up', but it was already too late.

She was splendidly caught by Tomoe.

She was taught things like: the way to cross the archway, how to clean your hands, and the way to pay homage.

For some reason, she even began explaining the methods that are not the common ones, like the Izumo Grand Shrine one.

It is normally only 2 bows, 2 claps, 1 bow. With all that information, you will only make her confused.

If you are going so far in explaining, rather than the 4 claps, it would be

better to teach her the 8 claps method that works even in grand festivals.

Most Japanese people know about it, but there's no way that Mio who lives in a parallel world would know, and even if she knows of it, I don't think she would be able to tell that there's a meaning behind it.

When we arrive at the archway, let's teach Mio and Shiki the simple way of paying homage.

"As expected, is there no doubt that it is what Waka-sama said?" (Shiki)
I nod at Shiki who has finally recovered.

"Seems so. It is still far, but there being an archway must mean that there's a road to a shrine." (Makoto) "Road to a shrine?" (Shiki)

"Ah, sorry. Saying it in a simple manner..." (Makoto)

It doesn't seem like we will need to wait before the gate, so it should be fine to give them a rough explanation about it.

If they want to learn in more detail about it, they can be the sacrifices of Tomoe- I mean, their students.

"Meaning that we will be entering the residence of someone with influence in the Shinto shrine. Well, just consider it a path leading to a temple in order to pray." (Makoto) "Temple... So a Shinto shrine is really a building with that kind of objective. The image of Gods in Asora isn't that good though..." (Shiki) "There's exceptions, but just think of them as incredibly old temples. We will just have to look forward to what we will be seeing there. But I don't think there's the need to get so tense about it." (Makoto) "An old temple, I feel like those words in itself are already contradicting themselves though. An old temple is it. They are unintelligible words like when trying to describe Waka-sama." (Shiki) It seems like the image I provided to Shiki has made him even more confused.

Was it really that hard to understand?

I thought it went well though.

Well, let's just leave Shiki alone.

That's right. The manmade object that appeared in Asora is...a Shinto shrine.

This is just a possibility but, I think there's no doubt that this is the other gift of the Gods.

A Shinto shrine as a gift from God...just saying it feels surreal.

Moreover, several buildings have appeared as well in this vast plot, so it makes it quite the present.

The full view is being obstructed by the forest, so not everything is in sight.

Honestly speaking, even when I have grasped everything with [Sakai], I still don't know what this is unless I go around checking it out myself.

We advance towards the giant archway that is not coated in vermillion and seems to be made of stone.

Chapter 223: Shinto Shrine.....

“As I thought, it seems to be only one person.” (Makoto) “If even Waka feels that way too, then there’s no mistake. It is hard to believe that there’s only one person here in this vast grounds-ja...” (Tomoe) Tomoe seems to be pondering something.

Having entered the grounds of the Shinto Shrine, there hasn’t been anything strange happening yet.

Just that, it seems like in this excessively spacious grounds, we learned that there’s only one person.

Doesn’t seem like it is moving.

Must mean that it is waiting for us.

“For a Shinto shrine precinct, it feels strange.” (Mio)

Mio is looking curiously around as she follows us.

Shiki is doing pretty much the same.

“It is completely different from the temple of the Goddess. If this is the precincts of a shrine, just who’s the God?” (Shiki) It seems like he is stuck in a question that he won’t be getting an answer by himself, so maybe he is actually doing something a bit different from Mio.

Even so, I check the surroundings like Mio.

Tall trees were lined in a row.

Every single one of them were so tall that I had to look up.

The atmosphere they create is calm, dignified, and yet, it was comfortable.

Maybe because the one who made it was an actual God.

It is a place that would be fit to call: a legendary forest, or an ancient forest.

“Truly fitting for a Shinto shrine. If it has this much space, it could even be called a Grand Shrine.” (Makoto) “That much? If that’s the case, we

can expect much from the actual place huh.” (Tomoe) Tomoe’s eyes were sparkling.

Maybe she is unaware of it, her breathing is also rough.

What I am most interested about is in “how long” the person in this place has been here.

Thinking about the place, maybe it is a Shinto priest?

But this is supposed to be a present from Daikokuten-sama.

In that case, I feel like a Japanese-style Buddhist temple would be more fitting.

We climb one by one the stairs that have no fallen leaves.

It seems like the cleaning is being properly done.

Thinking of the cleaning a single person would have to do in a place as big as this, I would feel like it would be more of a punishment than anything, but there’s probably magic involved in this.

“I thought it would be a more troublesome forest filled with traps.”
(Mio) Mio, this is no dungeon.

You can’t do something like that in a Shinto shrine...probably.

Well, it is certainly true that I am a bit disappointed in this atmosphere that doesn’t have a speck of hostility.

Now that I think about it, when I received the sea, they didn’t set up anything worth mentioning.

They probably gifted me a person to take care of the Shinto shrine or something like that.

There’s no Shinto shrines and temples in Asora after all.

“Oh, I can see it now. Is that the Shinto shrine that can be seen in Waka-sama’s world?” (Shiki) Just like Shiki said, a Shinto shrine building that I am used to seeing appeared in our field of vision.

Now that look at it in person, it is pretty big.

Surprisingly big.

“Ooooh!!” (Tomoe)

Tomoe is trembling.

She is incredibly moved.

A wry smile appears in my face.

But my smile soon froze.

That’s because of the other buildings that I suddenly saw at the sides.

What...is this?

“Uhm, Waka-sama? In my eyes, the buildings at the front and the right don’t look like they have much similarity. Well, they have a few similarities though. But the one at the left, isn’t the atmosphere completely different from the rest?” (Mio) “Y-Yeah.” (Makoto)

I could only nod at the question of Mio.

It was certainly as Mio said.

“It instead feels like only the one at the left has traces of a Goddess’ temple, or how to say it, in my eyes, it is close to the temples I am used to seeing. The ones at the front and the right are completely unknown to me though.” (Shiki) “...Yeah.” (Makoto)

I also nod at the words of Shiki.

The building at the left felt more like a temple of the Goddess.

It doesn’t match this place.

I do know that there are separate shrines in the Shinto shrine grounds.

Even in the common knowledge inside me, there’s information about this.

The ones called Jingu-ji.

Also called the Protectors of the Shrines, or Palace Guards; the materialization of Shinto and Buddhist syncretism.

They are shrines that protect the Shinto shrine, or so I think.

That's as far as I know as a hobby.

Leaving aside the modern era, the Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines obviously had times when they were at odds, so I think that the Jingu-jis vary depending on if it is a Buddhist temple or a Shinto shrine.

"...Waka, I am incredibly moved by this, but I see something at my left that is throwing cold water in my mood though. Is that a Shinto shrine too?" (Tomoe) "That's not. Or more like, the one at the front is certainly a Shinto shrine, but the one at the right is a Buddhist temple. And the one at the left is a foreign country's temple." (Makoto) "As I suspected, the one at the right is a Buddhist temple! Then it is the so called Jingu-ji, right?! Like the one at the Toshogu shrine. I see, I see, so that's what this is huh." (Tomoe) So she even knows of a place that has them.

As expected of Tomoe.

Gongen-sama are supposed to be the temporal forms of Buddha-sama after all. buddha in the form of an indigenous kami, an entity who had come to guide the people to salvation.> Even so...

"That thing...it is so out of place. Even if a Shinto shrine has a lot of depth to it, I feel like this is a bit too deep..." (Makoto) "A foreign country's temple. Now that I think about it, in Waka-sama's world, there were indeed a variety of religions." (Shiki) "Well, yeah. Taking that as the context, the religions we have here would be 3." (Makoto) "3, is it. That's quite the confusion." (Shiki)

What Shiki said is completely right.

"Well then, the one on the front would be the Shinto shrine; Shintoism." (Makoto) Pointing out the one at the front, I tell Shiki.

"The temple at the right, Buddhism." (Makoto)

"Fumu, fumu." (Shiki)

"And the one at the left is a Parthenon temple...I think. If I had to put a classification on it, it would be Christianity?" (Makoto) "Why do you say it as a question?" (Shiki)

“The design has remained, but it has been engulfed in history and repeatedly received changes, in the end, it is a place that has been taken by many different religions.” (Makoto) “In other words, there’s no remainings of its teachings?” (Shiki) “Well, that would be the case I guess. From what I know, that is.” (Makoto) The Greece mythology isn’t something that has been named as a religion and remained in the current times.

Greece was taken by Rome, and the Gods of Olympus have received name changes, and after being influenced by the Israel religion, it settled down as the next worship target of the Roman Empire.

But the Christian religion that was born from that Israel religion had received the official recognition of the Roman Empire, and it exterminated the other religions, or something like that.

There have been myths from other races flowing into Rome, and at first, the Christian religion had a mixture of those, is how I remember it.

Looking back at Christmas, there have been theories that say that it was a festival for the Gods in Rome.

Hmm, if I remember correctly...Saturn...

I kind of feel something is wrong.

But I remember I laughed at the name of that old game console with the same name, so there’s no doubt the name was Saturn.

Was it some sort of festival because of the winter solstice?

I just researched a bit deeper from what I learned in school and it isn’t knowledge that one can teach to someone else, but I still did my best there.

There are times when I want to show off a bit.

“Speaking of Christianity, it is one of the worldwide religions, right? If I remember correctly, Buddhism is also one of those.” (Shiki) “Yeah, that’s right. By the way, christianity is monotheist, but in the myths, there’s a lot of Gods appearing. So it would be better to not force yourself classifying it in one of those religions. Sorry for the confusion.” (Makoto) “Don’t mind

it.” (Shiki)

“I think it would be fine to just place a name like Greece myth religion, or Hellenism religion though. But the religion has not remained in the current times after all. The myths are famous worldwide though.”

(Makoto) “There’s some mysterious teachings in the world of Waka-sama.” (Shiki) “Ahaha...” (Makoto)

“Even so, in the beginning, there were a lot more Gods, and yet, right now there’s only one. Did the Gods do a battle royale or something?”

(Shiki) B-Battle Royale.

In a sense, that might be correct.

The ones that actually fought were the humans, and it was more of a fight between representatives.

“Shiki, if you are to call it something, it should be Kodoku, right? The strongest God devours the rest, and had its name resound for the posterity-ja.” (Tomoe) Tomoe, describing it as Kodoku is a bit...

Well, a battle royale and Kodoku are both a battle till the death though.

It is true that the history of religion is dyed in blood, and there’s probably something wrong with me, because I think that there’s no mistake that the strongest survived.

“W-Well, leaving aside that stuff, the Buddhist temple isn’t that strange since there’s Jingu-jis just like Tomoe said, but the temple at the left, I haven’t seen it before. I think it is a Parthenon temple, so maybe it is fine to call it a Jingu Parthenon?” (Makoto) It is completely white and it is made of stone after all.

It is clearly giving a different atmosphere.

The trees at its surroundings are a type I don’t have any recollection of as well.

“Doesn’t sound good. Why is something like this here?” (Shiki) “I do have a slight idea of why. Do you remember the Gods that came here before?” (Makoto) “Yeah, that group of three, right?” (Shiki)

“These are probably the temples that pertain to those three. The one at the front would be Susanoo-sama, or maybe Tsukuyomi-sama; the one at the right, Daikokuten-sama; the one at the left is most likely Athena-sama.” (Makoto) “Hohoh~. In that case, that means that Gods from different organizations went through the trouble to come to Asora? That’s interesting.” (Shiki) Ah.

That’s right.

If we are talking about Athena-sama, then that tree might be an Olive tree.

If I remember correctly, the Olive tree and Athena-sama have a deep connection.

If it were the Roman Minerva-sama, it would probably be a different tree.

But I can’t differentiate Greek temples and Roman temples. The person herself said she was Athena, so I think I am correct though.

I haven’t seen Olive trees before after all.

The most I have seen would be the matured fruit turned completely black.

“And so, the presence comes from the temple at the front. It seems like the other party doesn’t have any intentions of coming out itself. Since we have come all the way here, we should do a shrine visit. I do think that’s the manner when coming to places like this after all.” (Makoto) “What’s the correct etiquette in this place, Waka?” (Tomoe) “Let’s go for the normal 2 bows, 2 claps, and 1 bow. If that’s not the correct one, the person inside will probably tell us. See there, there’s a water place. Tomoe, teach Mio and Shiki the way to use it.” (Makoto) “Understood! Mio, Shiki, follow me!” (Tomoe)

There’s a pretty big and splendid water place.

As if waiting for the moment for me to suggest her to, Tomoe takes Mio and Shiki along, and she teaches them how to use the water place while doing it herself.

A wide space with gravel laid all over.

The Buddhist temple at the right and the Parthenon at the left.

It is certainly a familiar spectacle.

To the point that I unconsciously forgot about Asora for a moment.

It really brings me back.

Is 'water place' the common way to call it, or is it 'hand water'?

Both are correct, so it is hard to decide for one.

By the way, I call it 'water place', but it differs completely between people.

But from what I have heard, 'hand water' is the one that most people use. < Okay, let's call it water place in Asora.

Because I would have to teach them about the other ways of calling it as well.

Kukuku.

While I was thinking that, it seems like the three have finished using the water place.

I also go and cleanse my hands and mouth quickly.

There was no snake or dragon gushing water from their mouth, instead, there's a flower basin that was made out of stone and had water coming out naturally.

Maybe the bottom of the flower basin had water coming out, the water surface had ripples.

Well then, let's do the shrine visit.

I stand in front of the offering box that's probably empty inside.

Since it is a shrine in Asora, I place in the currency of Asora that Tomoe made.

1 ryo per person, so it would be 4 ryo.

Next, I grab the robe that has a bell connected above it, and rang it

loudly.

“You can do the same as I did. This may be obvious, but don’t show hostility.” (Makoto) The three nod.

First, they make a light bow.

Two deep bows, two claps, and then, one bow.

At the end, one light bow.

The beginning and the end are probably a greeting of sorts.

This feels really nostalgic.

Tsukuyomi-sama, I am somehow still alive.

One of my objectives is to return to Japan which you told me was impossible, but since I have other things left to do, I am thinking about prioritizing those first.

No matter what I become in the future, the words you told me: ‘Live freely and do as you please’, have become a support for me.

Please take care of your body, and recover with a tranquil heart.

My last bow became a bit long.

I lift my head and take a deep breath.

“Okay, we are done. Good job.” (Makoto)

I face the three.

The presence moved.

At our left, from inside the main shrine.

As always, no hostility.

There has been no contact yet, but it has moved to a pretty close distance from us.

This is bad. I have no experience in entering a shrine.

If it’s for a prayer, I have probably done it when I was a kid, but I don’t remember now.

I look at the direction of the presence.

Hm?

Is that an Omamori reception counter?

There are charms there after all.

...Eh?

“It seems like it is telling us to go there.” (Tomoe)

“It feels like that person is belittling Waka-sama, and that isn’t pleasing-desu wa.” (Mio) “Tomoe-dono said a while ago that ringing the bell signifies a greeting to the God. That person must have moved because of that.” (Shiki) “Well, let’s go and see. At least let’s be grateful that that person is not telling us to go to the Buddhist temple and the Parthenon temple first.” (Makoto) I honestly don’t know how to pray in a Parthenon.

--

When we went to the Omamori stand, there were a number of charms, votive pictures, and ceremonial arrows lined up there.

The difference between this and my previous world would be that these items clearly have magic power tinged in them.

When talking about charms, they are something like amulets which provide a passive effect.

But the ones here are more like talismans and feel like they give off an active effect.

They are probably charms that have quite the effectivity.

--

The inside of the main shrine is being delimited by the the sliding doors. But that person is certainly there.

“Isn’t it okay to meet each other face to face already?” (Makoto) I make up my mind and called that person.

As if responding to my words, the curtains opened quietly, and then, the

door opened.

...

There's one shrine maiden-san with three fingers pressed on the floor.

She didn't use her hands but a spell to open the door huh.

The person herself has her head lowered deeply.

Why is it, I don't feel any fear and I don't feel that much power from her, and yet, it is strangely suffocating.

I don't know if to call it mental pressure, but I could feel something from that girl.

I unconsciously gulp down my breath.

Then, the girl slowly lifted her head.

White, her skin was so white it was unbelievable.

Black hair, slightly bright light brown eyes, and her shrine maiden clothes made me think that she was Japanese for a second.

But I felt as if her skin itself was negating that she was a person.

I don't think it is make-up. It was a white that was more like paint.

But it wasn't pure white, I could feel a tinge of blue in it.

In my eyes, it looked like the color was not natural.

"Nice to meet you, Goshujin-sama. I was working as the shrine maiden of Tsukuyomi-sama, but I have been ordered to serve Makoto-sama. Please take care of me for the many years to come."

With a beautiful gentle smile, she called me her Goshujin-sama.

Chapter 224: A dangerous custom

“Tea.”

“Thanks.” (Makoto)

“I appreciate the long journey you made to come here. I...have longed for this day to come since long ago.”

Being invited inside the shrine, we were led to a place that seems to be the guest room, and the white skinned shrine maiden-san poured tea for us.

Now that I think about it, there's not much opportunities to enter a shrine.

Moreover, it is not to the place where we give prayers, but in a space where the shrine maiden-san is living in.

In modern days, the people in that line of work normally lived in other places, and most of them had to go back and forth between their home and the shrine.

I have obtained an experience I didn't expect I would get.

“I want to confirm this first but, did someone tell you to serve me?”
(Makoto) “Shiva –Daikuten-sama. This Shinto shrine, the Buddhist temple inside this grounds, and the temple; all of those three are joint presents from Daikokuten-sama, Susanoo-sama, and Athena-sama respectively.”

The shrine maiden-san speaks out the same names of the Gods of my previous world.

Only a restricted few know of my contact with those personages.

Then there's low chances that this is a trap huh.

...How to say it, the vigilance that Tomoe, Mio and Shiki are showing towards the shrine maiden-san is quite the thing, so even I end up getting nervous and cautious.

There has been no instance where the Goddess has made contact with Asora, and she has been surprisingly docile lately.

This may be what they call: 'the calm before the storm', so I can't be relieved though. Trying to set me up by using the names of the Gods that were one of the reasons she has turned docile would be too big of a risk for her.

That thing is not an impressive God that would be able to intervene in Asora without us being able to notice.

I exchange glances with Tomoe and the others and tell them with my eyes to calm down the slight hostility they are showing.

However, Tomoe looks like she is actually interested in the shrine maiden-san and wants to ask her a lot of things though, and yet, she is showing hostility as well.

I currently don't see this person as someone that dangerous.

It is certainly true that I am feeling something by being face to face with her, but even I myself don't know what that 'something' is.

I had a truly small lingering discomfort inside my heart.

That's how I felt.

I don't feel danger from her, and I don't see her as a threat either, so being stubborn because of a vague feeling based on my instincts would just be wrong.

"Athena-sama, is it. So that's why there's also a white Parthenon-looking temple as well." (Makoto) The shrine maiden-san made a slight sad expression.

"Goshujin-sama, please stop with the formal speech. I am a servant of yours. Please, treat me...like those three personages there."

"Hah..." (Makoto)

Even if you tell me that...treating you the same way as Tomoe and the others that have been living with me for a considerable amount of time would be a hard request for me.

Because of that, I ended up giving a vague response.

I am still not used to this sudden master and servant relationship.

I did have a similar experience with Sari, but I think I won't be treating her in the same way as Tomoe and the others in my lifetime.

If I had bought slaves in moderation and had gotten used to their treatment, would it have been any different?

...Those things are not in my nature though.

"That's quite the demand even though you suddenly popped up-desu wa ne." (Mio) "Exactly-ja. In the first place, to treat you in the same way as us when you haven't even introduced yourself, isn't that way too lacking in manners?" (Tomoe) "..."

Slightly after my vague response, Tomoe and Mio gave complains to the shrine maiden-san.

Shiki didn't really say anything.

But he doesn't seem to be in a good mood.

It is different from exhaustion, he is giving off a dangerous atmosphere.

"Asking for equal treatment? I wouldn't dare. Tomoe-san, I simply want to be added to the lowest seat of your group, that's all. Regarding my name...I was about to talk about that. There's some slight circumstances you see."

Tomoe?

Why does this shrine maiden-san know the name of Tomoe?

Leaving aside my name, did I even tell the Gods about the name of Tomoe?

"...This doesn't feel that good. I don't remember telling you my name." (Tomoe) "I have been informed of the minimum required information beforehand. Also, I apologize for my discourtesy. Sorry for that."

"Hmph."

"Ah then, can you please tell me the circumstances of your name?" (Makoto) It would be troublesome if this becomes too stormy.

I somehow cut into it and asked for an explanation from the shrine maiden-san.

That Tomoe, she was angered by the fact that the shrine maiden-san didn't introduce herself?

"It seems like Goshujin-sama is knowledgeable about Shinto shrines, so you probably already know. There's a few sides to being a shrine maiden."

She send me a meaningful gaze.

Well, I do have a bit of knowledge.

"The shrine maidens of modern times do things like Shinto ritual service and priesthood assistance, but if we go back a little, there were a lot of shrine maidens that did things like: divinations, prayers, and spiritualism." (Makoto) "In my case, I am an existence that is higher than the latter, but I currently also do the former ones as well."

"Is it like the Itako and the Azusa shrine maidens that are not that many compared to the past?" (Makoto) "That's how it is. Goshujin-sama doesn't seem to be in need of any of those, so I will leave the complementary explanation for a later time, and will prioritize the main issue. I had several names in the past. But they were all directed at me by the being I was related with."

"..."

Is she saying that she has been a spirit medium since forever?

Does that mean she is specialized in spiritualism?

"I am a shrine maiden that serves the Gods, and am also one of them. That's why I have abandoned those names, and since I have gotten a new master, I don't have a name to give. If I had to put an example, it would be like a relationship between the sun and moon, the puppet of the God I am employed with."

"...I don't really understand it well." (Makoto)

It was my honest impression.

It seems like she is trying to say that she is an existence that changes

names frequently and her existence resets every time she does it, but...

Can that be called living?

“It isn’t something that Goshujin-sama who has been living a mortal life would be able to understand immediately. Think of me as a tool that has a life, please.”

The shrine maiden calls herself a tool with a smile on her face.

That appearance of hers looked somewhat like Sari...or not.

Sari did that by her own volition.

But this shrine maiden-san gives me the impression that she is here because she was told to.

“So you are literally a gift huh.” (Makoto)

They send a person as a gift.

As expected of Gods, they are incredible in a lot of meanings.

No, if I think of her as a manager of these buildings, it is probably more normal than a sea huh.

Because no matter what kind of celebrity they are, someone wouldn’t normally be able to create a sea.

“Yes, that’s why Makoto-sama who will be my master from now on, and the followers that are already serving under Goshujin-sama: Tomoe-sama, Mio-sama, and...”

The shrine maiden-san shifts her gaze towards Shiki.

As if matching the movements of her eyes, Shiki, who was slightly further at my back, fell.

For a second, I thought that the shrine maiden-san did something, but once I looked at the posture of Shiki, I could tell the reason.

He has fallen to the side while still in his seiza position.

There’s no need to force yourself into doing seiza you know.

Tomoe and Mio are also doing seiza.

When I entered the room, I sat down in seiza by nature, and seeing that, it seems like the three of them did the same.

From the glimpse I caught, I could tell that the other two are still okay.

“I-I am sorry.” (Shiki)

“Don’t go showing openings.” (Mio)

pang

Along with those words, Mio brings out her folding fan from her bosom and hit the back of Shiki’s legs.

Uwaa.

That’s harsh.

“Ugh~~”

Without saying any comprehensible words, Shiki gives a reaction that was akin to fainting in agony.

His hands were wriggling in pain.

I can understand that feeling.

But opening, she says.

It is not enemy territory.

“Fufu, I don’t mind you taking a posture that’s more comfortable for you.”

“Sorry, thank you.” (Makoto)

I apologize and thank her in place of the agonizing Shiki.

“There’s no need to say that. It seems like the conversation has dragged on. I am the one that should be apologizing. Please just have in mind that I have already heard a considerable amount of things about all of you beforehand.”

After she finished saying that, she takes a sip of her tea.

The shrine maiden-san doesn’t change that gentle smile.

There's no awkwardness in it, she is skilfull.

...

Ah, so that's what it was.

She resembles people like: Rembrandt-san, Sairitz-san, and Zef.

People that are difficult to read their true feelings.

Rembrandt-san gets incredibly friendly when it concerns his family, so he doesn't fall completely in that category.

The type that even when laughing, you can't feel relieved, and even if they are angry, you can't tell if they are serious.

There's currently a lot of people like that in my surroundings, but that doesn't mean I am good at handling them.

Honestly speaking, leaving aside a distanced relationship, if I get involved with them directly, I get tired.

...Gods tend to like things like trials, so is this a personnel selection by those three after seeing through that weak side of me?

I am beginning to feel this is an incredible harassment.

With that alignment, I feel like this person is an incredibly capable person.

"I understand that you know about us. But I feel like the problem of not having a name has not been resolved yet." (Makoto) "I have heard that Goshujin-sama gives a name to the people that you have formed a ruling pact with. It would be a blessing if I were to receive a name from you after the pact. If there's no other shrine maiden, I don't mind if you call me shrine maiden though."

It is true that there's no shrine maidens in Asora aside from her.

But to have her go with no name would be cruel.

I have to think of a name again.

Well, she was a referral from the Gods, so I don't mind making a pact with this person.

In the first place, there's no demerits for me in doing a ruling pact.

That's only if the pact is possible, that is.

The only thing I am bothered about is that she seems to give the air of being secretive, but with a pact made, that won't be much of a problem.

...Probably.

"Is it possible to do a pact with me now?" (Makoto)

"There's probably no problem. If Goshujin-sama holds his power back a bit and makes a pact with me, I think I will be able to somehow manage."

It is like in the time with Shiki huh.

After that, Shiki got a pretty special ability he called the 13th steps.

That's probably...not a demerit.

"Then I will have to return to my home and prepare for it. Or is it necessary for the pact to be here? Do you have any sort of circumstances?" (Makoto) The distribution of work is currently heavily leaned towards Shiki.

I think she at least can do work better than me, so I don't think it is bad to have more followers.

It is fine to accept—

"Wait." (Tomoe)

"...Tomoe? What?" (Makoto)

"Even if it's the gift of those Gods from a different world, I think it is a problem to accept this woman so fast." (Tomoe) It is a gift from the Gods in Tsukuyomi-sama's side, so there shouldn't be any problems.

It would be one thing if she were a gift of the humans or the Goddess, but it is from the Gods of that side, you know?

I don't think there's the need to get your breathing rough.

"But Tomoe, isn't that fine? She doesn't seem to have infiltrated from the outside, and we already know that she suddenly appeared in Asora.

There's no chance it is a trap from the humans or the Goddess."

(Makoto) The only ones that have been able to invade Asora without my or Tomoe's permission are this shrine maiden, and the Gods that gave us this imposing Shinto shrine and the many other things.

"From what I hear, this shrine maiden has been serving the Gods until now. Is that right?" (Tomoe) "Yes. I have been serving Tsukuyomi-sama until the modern times, and have been doing routine tasks."

Tomoe directs her questions at the shrine maiden-san, and she responded with her unchanging smile.

She doesn't seem to be agitated.

"How are you going to proof that?" (Tomoe)

"Sadly to say, I don't have the evidence to proof that claim."

"Then that means we can't erase the possibility that you were send by someone with a hidden agenda in mind-ja na?" (Tomoe) "Yes. But if it is something that I can do, I will cooperate in any manner to earn your trust."

"Then let me read your memories. You say that you want to become a member of ours-ja. You won't mind, right? Of course, I will protect your secrets and will not reveal them." (Tomoe) "Ah right, Tomoe-san has the power of reading memories. But to read the memories of an object like me...are you able to read the memories of a thing like that?"

An object huh.

Why is it I am feeling slightly pissed by that?

It is close to what I felt with Sari.

"I don't really find it pleasant to have Waka-sama get a follower that calls herself an object though." (Mio) Mio also gave an objection towards having the shrine maiden-san as a follower.

If it is the instinct of Mio, there's a pretty high chance that it is dangerous.

No no.

If it's those Gods, there's no way.

"I am simply telling you to show that you don't have any evil intent or are a threat first, you know? I am telling you to expose all the memories you are hiding there." (Tomoe) "That's a problem. I have not been hiding them to begin with. Excuse me for saying this but, maybe Tomoe-san's power doesn't work on objects?"

"Hoh...you are saying that you are not hiding them? That's what you claim?" (Tomoe) "And in reality, there's nothing I need to hide from my senpai and the personage that I will be serving with my life on the line. Mio-san, regarding my behavior, I will fix that as fast as possible as I serve Goshujin-sama, so please, give me a bit of time for that."

"..."

"..."

I feel like there's invisible sparks flying around.

No, there's no doubt there are sparks.

If Tomoe and Mio are against it, it is fine to just let her manage the Shinto shrine with no pact involved.

It is not like she has told me we must have a ruling pact anyways.

"...I heard that Goshujin-sama is thinking about clashing blades with a God one day. Leaving aside the present time, it depends on the degree of the opponent, but when it comes to an existence in the plane of Gods, I would only be an hindrance with my current power. Forming a ruling pact would be useful for me, and on top of that, I think it is of importance. Goshujin-sama, please."

Right.

It is not like I have forgotten about it, but if I am thinking about fighting the Goddess once, the more the better.

There's no resident in Asora that can participate directly in the fight with the Goddess.

The most would be Tomoe, Mio and Shiki.

If one more were to join those numbers, it would definitely reduce the burden of Tomoe and the others.

How stupid of me.

There's still time. That means there's time for the shrine maiden-san to get along with everyone.

If this will increase the safety of everyone, not only will this strange worry be useless, it would actually become detrimental.

This is just like the shrine maiden-san said.

"It is certainly true that having more fighting power wouldn't be a problem. If possible, I want to make that Goddess –that Bug– yield without having to lose anyone." (Makoto) As if confirming my own wish, I voice it out.

"Oh my, what a sturdy spirit. Fighting a God, and not killing but making it yield, moreover, without a single casualty. Being able to say something like that when possessing the body of a mortal, as expected of the person that the Gods have taken an interest in."

Hearing another person explain it, I am beginning to feel that what I said is completely crazy.

Well, it doesn't simply feel crazy, it is actually crazy huh.

Now that I think about it, the world that I was thrown into was weird in the first place, so I didn't think that my own thoughts were strange.

"Shrine maiden-san, if I were to say that I will be fighting the Goddess, you will obviously follow us, right?" (Makoto) "Of course. To begin with, as long as I am in a ruling pact, it is impossible to go against Goshujin-sama. I promise that something like that will not happen, but if there's a time when you are not able to believe in me and you won't allow me to join the fight, the ruling pact will become an assurance that I won't turn a traitor."

To tell the truth, I am currently slightly troubled in how I should be treating her.

But having a ruling pact will eliminate the danger of being stabbed in the back, and in the first place, there's the possibility this person will move around as she wishes in Asora and create trouble.

As I thought, it would be best to make a pact.

Okay, I have decided!!

"Yeah, I will do a pact with shrine maid—" (Makoto)

"Waka-sama, can I speak as well?" (Shiki)

Again?

This time it is Shiki huh.

What to do. I said I have already decided, but if even he were against it, my feelings will waver.

"What is it, Shiki?" (Makoto)

"Since the time we began our conversation in this room, I feel like that shrine maiden-dono there has been directing gazes at me for some reason." (Shiki) "...Hah?"

I involuntarily let out a dumbfounded voice.

"Of course, I am not acquainted with her. Shrine maiden-dono, can I please hear why?" (Shiki) "Shiki, the continuous teleportation must have gotten you hard-ja na. Sorry, forgive us." (Tomoe) "...Hah..." (Mio)

Tomoe and Mio were looking at Shiki with strange eyes.

That's what I thought when Tomoe suddenly spoke out rare words of worry towards Shiki, and Mio placed a hand on her forehead and sighed.

I actually wanted to say something as well, you know?

But Shiki is pretty popular in Asora, at the Academy, and in the villages as well.

It is not like he is being overly self-conscious.

I didn't notice it, but maybe the shrine maiden-san has actually been sending gazes to Shiki.

“I tried not to make it conspicuous though. To think that you actually noticed, I have shown a shameful sight.”

Eh?!

“What a woman of bad taste-ja na. To think that this is what you like.” (Tomoe) “Tomoe-san, likes differ between people-desu wa. There will obviously be women that like even a pitiful person like Shiki.” (Mio) “Intellectual types attract me. And it seems like he has cute sides like having his legs go numb. He is truly likeable. Ah of course, I feel the same amount of cuteness from Goshujin-sama.”

“...Hmph.”

“I retract my statement. I can’t just overlook this as having bad taste in food.” (Mio) What’s with this?

I wanted to retort by telling Mio that she is the last person that should be saying that.

In the first place, her first statement was supposed to be a supportive one towards the shrine maiden-san.

I remember that there have been a lot of people that have mistaken the name of Shiki with mine in the academy.

By a lot of people too.

“...Being told that, I can’t pursue the topic much. I don’t know your taste in men after all. Just that...I don’t feel like having a close relationship with a woman like you.” (Shiki) Shiki firmly rejects her.

Impressive.

If it were me, I wouldn’t be able to know if she is a woman I don’t want to be close with in such a short amount of time.

“That’s a pity. Then I at least hope we will be able to have a good relationship as colleagues and as friends.”

This one is impressive too.

The two of them are laughing.

Now that I look again, Tomoe and Mio are also smiling coldly.

Shrine maiden-san has a gentle smile, Shiki had a confrontational smile.

I have a bitter smile.

I did the best I could and somehow managed to bring out a bitter smile.

“...Ah, uhm...in my case, I would like more fighting force. As long as we don’t know how strong is the other side, I would like to do the most I can to face her. That’s why I think I want to make a pact with this shrine maiden-san. I am also thinking this with the safety of Asora in mind.”

(Makoto) “...”

I was somehow able to put in words in this atmosphere.

The three and the shrine maiden-san were silent.

“...How about it?” (Makoto)

No one was saying their approval or their opposition, so I got slightly uneasy and requested for a reaction.

“Even if you ask us what we think, if Waka has decided it, we will just obey.” (Tomoe) “Yes, I will obey your decision-desu wa.” (Mio)

“I as well, if it is something that Waka-sama has decided, I have no objections.” (Shiki) Hoh, that’s great.

“Just that...” (Tomoe)

Uh, it is Tomoe.

She intends to bring out some sort of condition?

“What?” (Makoto)

“If possible, I want Waka to ask questions about Waka’s world... questions that are related to the modern times. I can’t read the memories of this woman at all. Maybe because of this power of mine, I have grown unable to easily believe in people I can’t read. I might be laughed at for being a cowardly follower, but please.” (Tomoe) Tomoe looks at me with a stiff expression.

Well, if that will let the three have peace of mind, I don’t mind.

If this girl has knowledge of modern Japan, I would be able to trust her more than now.

Right.

What should I ask?

“Shrine maiden-san obviously knows about modern Japan, right?”
(Makoto) I will confirm just in case.

“Yes. I seldom move around, but if it’s a bit, I do.”

She truly has an expression I can’t read emotions from.

If I just take it simply as a smile, it would look good willed.

This is also simple, but when a beauty does it in such a natural manner, the effectiveness is also high.

If it were in my time in Japan, I would have definitely been frivolous with no trace of doubts.

“Then it is fine if I question you now, right?” (Makoto)

“If this will reduce your doubts towards me, it is welcoming. Please go ahead.”

“Understood.” (Makoto)

“Since we have the chance, if you are to ask me anything related to Goshujin-sama, I think I will be able to answer most of it. It is impossible for someone like me to hold all the knowledge of one world, but if it is Japan, moreover, related to Goshujin-sama, I have studied.”

Is she leading me?

But...if she has knowledge of my past as well as my surroundings, it is certainly true that the suspicions will decrease a lot.

I don’t think the Goddess would be that knowledgeable after all.

But on the contrary, if it were Tsukuyomi-sama, he seems like the type that would be knowledgeable about those things.

In that case, first...

“Then what’s the day of the sale for the magazine, Dusk, that I buy monthly?” (Makoto) It is a question that’s closely related to my livelihood.

Probably even Tomoe and the others don’t know this one.

Dusk has a concentration of maestros in period dramas and rising stars. It is probably one of the most thickest and heaviest monthly publications in Japan.

At times, there would be diorama designs and castle designs, and that makes it even bigger.

Even so, the price is low and it is such a sublime service that wouldn’t be strange if they were to suspend publication anytime.

They have been doing something so reckless since the times before I was born, and their rise and fall has not been affected at all. Its other name is the Immortal Magazine.

And yet, the popularity it has with the people is low for some reason.

“Dusk magazine huh. At the 22nd.”

I-Instant answer.

“...Correct.” (Makoto)

“As expected of a huge company that does this magazine as a hobby, it is a magazine that has tremendous stability.”

Actually, she even knows things I don’t.

That’s something a huge company was publishing?

Where’s that splendid company?

“Tomoe, I think this person is fine.” (Makoto)

“Waka, please don’t grin over a single question. Try other random questions as well.” (Tomoe) She knows Dusk, you know.

The magazine that I love reading and only few in my class knew about.

She even gave an instant answer for the date it comes out for sale, you know?

She is a good person.

At the very least, I am beginning to think she is not a bad person.

After that, I continued the questions without a choice, but the shrine maiden-san answered them all almost instantly.

There's just no space for doubt, she knows modern Japan.

I tried in areas that have low connection with me just in case, but the result didn't change.

"Tomoe, there's no doubt that this person is from my previous world."
(Makoto) "On the contrary, I don't like that she has answered practically all of them correctly, but I at least have accepted it now." (Tomoe) "Mio, it seems like this shrine maiden-san is good at cooking. Won't it help you in increasing your menu?" (Makoto) "I will decide if I will let her inside the kitchen, but I have understood that she does have knowledge about your world-desu wa." (Mio) "Shiki, wouldn't it help you in your research if you had someone with the magic knowledge of Gods?" (Makoto) "If it's just purely listening to opinions, I think it will be beneficial. I didn't find any space for doubts in those clear answers of hers." (Shiki) "Thank you very much, everyone. I may be a newcomer, but please, take care of me."

...Why is it...my stomach is feeling slightly itchy.

"You are jumping the gun a bit there." (Tomoe)

"Eh?"

Tomoe?

"To become the follower of Waka, there's a customary event that has to be done. Of course, I will have you do it as well." (Tomoe) Even I don't know about that custom though?

Yeah, I have no memories of deciding something like that.

And yet, Mio and Shiki seem to have an idea about it, they show joy in their face as they nod at the words of Tomoe.

Seriously?

Why is there an unknown custom in making a pact with me?

A custom is something that is established after repeatedly doing it and becomes a settled thing to do, right?

The only thing that I have definitely done with Tomoe and the others when making a pact, is only that, a pact—ah.

Don't tell me...

"I didn't know about that. I will happily do it. What would that custom entail?"

Wait, could it be...

"Don't worry, it is nothing complicated. We will only have you fight Waka with all you have-ja." (Tomoe) "...Hah?"

So it really was that!!!

"And with the intend to kill." (Tomoe)

The shrine maiden-san now has her eyes wide opened!!

"Like hell there's such a dangerous custom!" (Makoto)

"Now now Waka. The result is obvious, but it is a form of welcoming you know? Mio, Shiki and I; all of us have fought with our all against Waka before making a pact." (Tomoe) "Well, that's true but..." (Makoto)

"It is logical that we would want the new follower to show us her power at the very least. Because you can mix falsehood in your words as much as you want after all." (Tomoe) It is certainly true that I don't know the strength and type of power this shrine maiden-san has.

I simply felt like she wouldn't fall behind Tomoe and the others, so I thought that she was definitely strong.

Also, that she doesn't have the required amount of strength to accompany me.

Mio and Shiki were nodding over and over again as if it is a matter of course, and were riding on the words of Tomoe.

"But to go with the intend to kill is just..." (Makoto)

“Everyone did that too. Also, if you are to form a pact, you won’t be able to fight seriously against each other. It is something you can only do now.” (Tomoe) “Hm...” (Makoto)

“What a blunder. To think that I would ask to be a member of your group without even showing my power. It is certainly true that I have done something discourteous. If Goshujin-sama consents, I will happily do it.”

Uh, the shrine maiden-san is quite the fighting type huh.

Not only did she not flinch, she was positive about it.

Tomoe and the others have narrowed their eyes slightly and accepted her words.

Well, if I don’t go with the intend to kill, I don’t think it will turn into anything serious.

In terms of killing intent, I didn’t have any of those with Tomoe and the others either after all.

Well, in the case of Mio, that might be questionable though.

“Then, let’s move to a more spacious place. I wouldn’t want to fight within Shinto shrine grounds after all.” (Makoto) Even if the shrine maiden-san doesn’t mind, I don’t want to do it.

I press the others to go outside.

“Right.” (Tomoe)

Tomoe doesn’t seem to mind that and consented in leaving.

Leaving aside the shrine maiden-san, Tomoe likes the Shinto shrine itself, so it is probably the obvious response huh.

“Thanks for the consideration, Goshujin-sama. The only ability I can be proud of compared to the others is probably only my speed, but I will do my best. Please do take care of me.”

“Ah, same here.” (Makoto)

Speed.

That’s the weapon of this shrine maiden-san huh.

I thought she would do things like using yin-yang spells or use a naginata.

No well, speed can coexist with both possibilities.

Actually, isn't it strange to reveal that herself?

...Hah...I can't help but feel like I am already falling in the trap of my opponent by thinking about this.

As I thought, there's no doubt she is the type I have difficulty in dealing with.

I can't let her stir up my mind and lose.

That would be way too pathetic.

I will fight with my own fighting style.

On top of that, I will make her show the cards she has so that the three have a peace of mind, and I will win.

The things that I have to do, and the things that Tomoe expects me to do; if it's my current self, I can somewhat grasp what those are.

We temporarily leave the grounds of the Shinto shrine and head to a plain we saw while we were on our way here.

"This is a good place."

"Will you be able to show your power to your heart's content?" (Tomoe)
"Yes."

"Waka, are you prepared too?" (Tomoe)

"Anytime you want." (Makoto)

"Then I will be stepping back." (Tomoe)

Tomoe bows towards me and heads to where Mio and Shiki are.

That place doesn't have anything delineating the area, but if it's those three, they will be able to defend against the attacks that come flying and the waves, so there's no need to worry.

I just have to concentrate on the white-skinned shrine maiden-san in

front of me.

“I am completely prepared. Goshujin-sama, when you have finished your preparations, please let me know.”

“ ... ”

At her waist, she has a matching pair of long and short swords, and in her hands, a naginata huh.

Also, she has something hidden in her bosom.

So she is completely prepared.

Being equipped with weapons is quite the human-like way of fighting.

“Goshujin-sama?”

Towards a person that I will be forming a pact with, moreover, someone that I will be fight with the intend to kill even if it's for argument's sake; it would be strange for me to always be speaking formally to someone like that huh.

She did ask me to stop the formal speech.

“Anytime you want. Just like I told you before, they did tell you to fight with the intend to kill, so there's no need for you to be considerate.”
(Makoto) “Ara.”

...An extreme bloodlust was suddenly emitted.

This isn't something that can be immediately aimed at someone that she had been calling Goshujin-sama not that long ago.

That smile and her gaze that had been gentle from beginning to end, for the first time, I felt like emotions had been lit in them.

.....

Even though I hadn't taken my eyes off the shrine maiden-san, her figure disappeared.

If this is something caused by speed, this is an incredible degree.

Immediately following that, I felt an impact from the Magic Armor that I

had expanded narrowly and concentrated.

The grass sparsely growing in the area shook with a slight delay.

There's unreasonable spells like teleportation, and I have already gotten used to this parallel world, so I won't get surprised just because she disappeared though.

So this is truly the speed she can bring out without any visible motion?

"Even if it was just in place of a greeting, it is surprising that you are unscathed. As expected. By the way...I am only a shrine maiden with no name yet, but it wouldn't be suitable to call me No Name or shrine maiden here."

Her voice was coming from a place I don't know.

I can't see her, and her presence is here and there and I am unable to catch it at all.

Like a strong flickering light, she is clearly lowering and increasing her presence and bloodlust in order to confuse me.

I take one deep breath and let it out.

There's no need to get agitated.

It will be a long fight anyways.

It is fine to just converse.

"And?" (Makoto)

"That's why, I will be telling you an alias of mine. A name I have been called with a long time ago."

"That would help a lot. Honestly speaking, I didn't felt good calling you shrine maiden-san all the time." (Makoto) In the middle of the conversation, I could feel attacks being dealt several times.

And there were also impacts from magic.

I couldn't see either of those.

I honestly think that this is impressive.

I can understand why she is proud of it.

From the front, sides, back; they are not reaching me, but I am one-sidedly receiving attacks.

“Fufu. Touda, there was a time in the past when I was called that way. It was truly a short time though.” (Touda) “Touda huh. Understood.” (Makoto)

I feel I have heard it before.

Even so, from what I heard in the conversation before, there's no assurance it will be of help right now.

Instead of trying to remember, it would be better to concentrate on the girl I am fighting with.

She said she had many names, and that she has been associated with many existences; if I were to be bothered by every single thing like that, there would be no end.

That's fine.

Because in terms of her power...I will make her show it from now on after all.

Chapter 225: The shrine maiden dances

The earth is gouged out and blown around.

It is the result of kicking the ground powerfully.

This spectacle was unfolding here and there in my field of vision.

“Even Tomoe and the others are surprised. That’s impressive.” (Makoto)
And as it happens, my Magic Armor continues to receive the attacks as usual.

The power and type is changed constantly, and I could feel that she was trying to sound out my defense.

It even felt like she was telling me she was doing that.

She is probably also sounding out my reaction.

Touda.

I thought she was a doll-like shrine maiden, but her current state is pretty forward.

When a fight unfolds, her atmosphere changes.

She is a woman that resembles me.

The attacks I can’t see don’t stop.

With a speed I can’t perceive, she continues her attacks and her endless turn.

What an irrational power.

But...

“...Fuh...well, time to do it then.” (Makoto)

Even if I can’t see her with my eyes, there’s still a lot of ways to deal with this.

I was uneasy doing this with an opponent that seems to be able to increase her power even more, but I changed [Sakai] from strengthening to perception.

I can feel her.

She doesn't stop in one spot, her movements are marked.

Even so, no matter where she is, she is able to send killing intent without hesitation.

Of course, I can't narrow the aim like this.

Seriously.

Frankly speaking, there's no way to aim at a target like this.

That's why I won't aim.

I could tell that her marked movements are all centered in me.

I search for the distance.

The limit distance that Touda separates from me.

"You just introduced yourself and I haven't seen your figure again. This is hard to deal with." (Makoto) I set on fire all the area that I have seen through.

A strong light and fitting heat had filled up the area till where Tomoe and the others are.

There was no aria.

I released it, doing my best not to show any signs of my action.

"Fufufu, to think that you would attack me with fire after I introduced myself as Touda." (Touda) "I feel like it has been a long time since I have seen that figure of yours, Touda. Was fire a bad idea?" (Makoto) "Wicked Fire General...that's an alias that Touda has as well, Goshujin-sama." (Touda) Is that so.

Well, since she called herself Touda, I was wondering if it was Enda-san, but maybe it was the name of a God?

Touda is pouring me with bloodthirst as always, and yet, she is showing the same smile she had in the shrine.

"Even so, you seem to be quite used to killing." (Makoto)

I personally don't remember doing anything to be hated for.

Does that mean she is the type of person that can go with the intent to kill just because she was told to do it? This shrine maiden-san, Touda.

"Goshujin-sama also seems to be used to being attacked. You don't look agitated at all. And it seems like you can use a giant barrier I have never seen before. I didn't know about that." (Touda) Looks like she received no damage.

So I only managed to heat her up huh.

That's perfect.

"For some reason, these few years, I am prompt to being attacked. More importantly..." (Makoto) "What is it?" (Touda)

"Have you heard about my bow from the Gods as well?" (Makoto)

Seeing the movements of Touda, that's the only conclusion I can arrive at.

It looks like she knows of my accuracy beforehand.

Did she receive that much information in advance?

If that's the case, why doesn't she know about Sakai and the Magic Armor?

It is not to the point of bringing about suspicion, but it does bother me.

"I have been told that you possess a rare talent. But the details of it..." (Touda) "Ah, I see." (Makoto)

So she can't answer me huh.

She knows of my bow, but not about Sakai.

Currently, from my experience, her fighting style resembles that of Hibiki-senpai.

Well, instead of calling it similar, their core style being speed is technically the same.

The only difference would be that Senpai didn't move around this much,

and she wasn't as cautious against my mid and long ranged attacks as Touda is.

The part about not being able to see Touda even when she attacks makes her even more troublesome though.

“Now then...” (Touda)

“Yes?”

“Let's continue the killing.” (Touda)

Touda's figure disappeared again—or not.

She had stopped in place, and from her hands, something string-like that had the color of molten metal began appearing one after the other.

The shrine maiden had stopped disappearing, but in her place, the string-like things had disappeared.

Those were no strings, they are whips!

I could feel a different kind of impact transmitted to the Magic Armor.

I see. The reason why she is doing this without erasing her figure from sight is because I am being tested here.

Heh~.

I am kinda beginning to feel like I am actually fighting now.



“...”

The three were silently spectating the progress of the fight between Makoto and the shrine maiden that called herself Touda.

It is not like they didn't feel anything from the fight.

The three followers of Makoto had their own thoughts surfacing in their minds.

(She is good. If she is evenly matched to us even before the pact, she is certainly higher than Mio and I-ja. She is able to maintain her bloodthirst even in the face of Waka, and on top of that, she is trying to test him. A

temperament that is still unreadable, but she is definitely not a coward. There's no doubt that she would become a great help in the battle between the Goddess if she were to become the follower of Waka.) (Tomoe) Tomoe was observing with narrowed eyes the figure of the shrine maiden as she attacks Makoto with the wild flame whips.

Small throwing weapons, spears, daggers; it felt like a fair of weapons.

She is obviously able to control her magic, moreover, she is able to use a variety of weapons in the intervals of the fight.

It is something that a normal individual would definitely be unable to do.

(What she is showing is different from that of Root, it is not enjoyment. But I can't feel pure hostility or hatred either. The moment I first saw her, I felt some sort of presence for an instant. Just what was that? I don't think it was my imagination-ja ga.) (Tomoe) Her speech and conduct, and her behavior as well; all of them didn't match with the first instant that she had felt from her.

The presence that Tomoe felt from the shrine maiden in that instant made her hold doubts.

On the other hand, at the battlefield, wind was gathering with Makoto as its focus, and a tornado that reached till the skies had been formed.

Moreover, the fire whips touched the tornado and melted together, changing into a ferocious red pillar.

(Not only Waka-sama, she looked like she was trying to sound us out as well. In the first place, not having a name doesn't serve as an excuse for not introducing herself. Because she could just tell Waka-sama she had no name from the very beginning. Also, she suddenly gave out a name at this point in time. Right now as well, it feels like every move of hers is trying to test Waka-sama and us, and I don't like that at all.) (Mio) Mio felt displeasure at the shrine maiden that was directing surveying eyes at Makoto and his followers, and also, the actions of the shrine maiden that were as if she were testing them.

All her words sounded honest, however, Mio felt like there was some sort of faint trace of a different impression, which was also one of the reasons of her displeasure.

(It is also strange that she was specially interested in Shiki. She didn't look like she was directing love at him after all. Those weren't the eyes you direct at someone you like. Those were truly the eyes of someone surveying. Even now, she is trying to test out the power of Waka-sama. She is truly a disgusting woman-desu wa. Just what is she thinking?) (Mio) Looking at the fight, Mio didn't have much of an impression towards the power of the shrine maiden.

Because there was no meaning for her in who is stronger anyways.

She already knows that she is not an existence that surpasses Makoto.

That's why she is only feeling displeased at the fact that the shrine maiden is testing Makoto. She wasn't interested in her power.

The red pillar was torn up from the inside, and the figure of Makoto's Magic Armor was exposed.

There were no signs of the Magic Armor being broken at all from the magic of the shrine maiden.

But Touda didn't falter from that. She held down her agitation in an instant and proceeded to her next action.

Closing the distance, she swings the katana at her waist once.

The Magic Armor obstructed its path, but that attack froze the area it hit.

With a flurry of slashes, the Magic Armor was hardened in ice.

(Not only is it hard to catch her with the eye, she possesses a speed that makes it hard to even catch her presence, and yet, she has shifted her fighting style to one where she personally goes to attack Waka-sama with her figure in sight. Is she testing him? How foolish. But...she didn't show much interest in Tomoe-dono and Mio-dono, and yet, she seemed to have a strange interest in me and Waka-sama. What was the reason of that?)

The first fighting style was a choice made because of her knowledge of Waka-sama's specialty, but it seemed like she hadn't accounted for Waka-sama's Magic Armor. I can't understand. I can't understand, but...at the very least, I can tell that she is strong. If Waka-sama desires more fighting power, she possesses power that is acceptable.) (Shiki) Shiki probably understood the gaze the shrine maiden directed at him more than anyone else.

Because it wasn't something strange for people like Shiki.

Surveying.

The eyes of someone that wants to smell out even the slightest amount of information.

It was an interest that was totally different from that of love.

It is exactly because he saw through the intentions of the shrine maiden, that he could so easily reject that stupid act of hers.

Looking at the fight of Makoto with the shrine maiden, he could certainly see that she is strong.

She says that she is an envoy of the Gods from the other world, but in essence, she is a woman 'that doesn't have a single proof of her origins' and he could only try thinking of her identity and her thoughts, with no result.

He bit his lips.

The reason why Makoto wanted fighting power.

Shiki could easily tell that this was because Makoto was looking out for their and Asora's safety.

Makoto is trying to fight the Goddess.

However, he also doesn't want to sacrifice the people close to him.

Then it would be better to have strong people and comrades cooperating.

Shiki doesn't know how Tomoe and Mio would answer, but if he were

asked if he himself has the confidence of coming back safely from the fight of Makoto with the Goddess, he wouldn't be able to nod yet.

That's why he was mortified.

If only Shiki had the sufficient strength to declare firmly that Tomoe, Mio, and him could go together with Makoto, fight alongside him against the Goddess, and return; maybe Makoto wouldn't have thought about accepting this shrine maiden. That's how Shiki felt.

(If I could at least master the 13th steps...) (Shiki) Shiki had a self-depreciating smile surfacing on his face.

From the place where Makoto is, intense waves often reached towards Shiki and the other two followers, shaking their hair and clothes.

The reason why they were let off with only that much was because there's a barrier enveloping their surroundings.

The fight, which is the origin point, was increasing in intensity at high speed.

Makoto shoots a Rocket Punch with the arm of the Magic Armor that was frozen.

With a short aria, a white light gathers at the hand of Touda and shoots it at the frozen fist.

The light breaks the fist and continued its straight trajectory towards Makoto, and just as it was right before him, it turns into darkness, and dyes his field of vision in pitch black.

Shiki turns his gaze from the fight to his side.

At that place, there's Tomoe.

"Tomoe-dono, shouldn't it be okay to break it up now?" (Shiki) "Hm, yeah, you are right-ja na. It seems like she has the power to make a pact with Waka. Let's finish it while Waka is still able to hold back." (Tomoe) "Yeah, if this continues, Waka-sama will..." (Shiki)

"What are you saying, Shiki? Tomoe-san too. Waka-sama is having fun here, so it is fine to just watch silently until it reaches a conclusion." (Mio)

“Mio, are you saying that you won’t mind if Waka is soaked in the joy of killing? No, it is certainly true that you wouldn’t have any problems with that though.” (Tomoe) Tomoe’s expression distorts.

On the other hand, Mio had a surprised expression.

Tomoe and Shiki had an understanding of what happened when Makoto summoned the Gate, and they were worried that he would once again reach that state of mind here.

Shiki also nodded at what Tomoe said.

“Joy of killing? What are you talking about?” (Mio)

“About the Gate that was summoned a few days ago-ja. The one that brought about the wrath of Waka.” (Tomoe) “Ah, you said he was smiling, right?” (Mio)

“That’s right-ja. Waka himself didn’t seem like he was conscious of it though. If that’s an omen that he is awakening his joy in killing and destroying...” (Tomoe) “Are you saying the current Waka-sama is showing those signs, you two?” (Mio) Tomoe and Shiki meekly nod at Mio’s words.

Makoto’s figure was still enveloped in darkness.

However, Brids were attacking Touda at high speed and precision.

“Pu...ufu...ufufufufufu.” (Mio)

Looking at the faces of the two, Mio laughs.

“What’s that, so suddenly.” (Tomoe)

“What’s wrong?” (Shiki)

“You were worrying about something so out of mark that it is amusing.” (Mio) “...Out of mark?” (Tomoe)

After a slight pause, Tomoe asks Mio back.

“Yeah. Waka-sama is not the type of person that would find joy in killing. The reason why he is having fun right now is because he is wondering about what he should do next, what he should try doing next. He is most likely purely having fun in thinking about the next step he

should take-desu wa.” (Mio) “Why can you tell?” (Shiki)

Even though Mio said ‘most likely’, her tone didn’t hold any signs of being a simple guess.

It felt like she was talking while being completely sure.

Shiki was bothered by the basis of her confidence, so he questioned Mio.

“Why are you asking something like that so late in the game. In the first place, the ones that feel joy in destroying and killing, are people that have some sort of strong attachment to life and objects, you know?” (Mio) “...”

“Waka-sama doesn’t have either of them. That’s why it is definitely impossible that he would get drunk in the action of killing. That’s the reason why-desu wa ne. You two, you were at the side of Waka-sama and didn’t notice that?” (Mio) “...”

“Look look. That shrine maiden has used all of her weapons, and her magic power has been consumed quite a lot. Using magic power like that in Asora is a bad move-desu wa. There’s a difference between utilizing the power in this surroundings and fighting in a place where magic power is overflowing. She probably doesn’t know how to fight here.” (Mio) “Mio, you...why did you think that Waka has no attachment to life?” (Tomoe) “... Tomoe-san?” (Mio)

“Can you please tell me?” (Tomoe)

“Why do you have that scary expression? If I had to say it simply, when Waka-sama talks about the importance of life and those kind of things, his words sound so~~ much as if he had borrowed them from somewhere else. As if he had just taken those words from someone else or from a book he read. It didn’t sound like Waka-sama truly thought that way. Ah, of course, there are exceptions you know. Waka-sama is the type of person that really treasures his family. That’s—ah!” (Mio) “Borrowed...huh.” (Tomoe)

“Tomoe-san, looks like it is ending.” (Mio)

Mio casually answered the question she was asked, and stopped in the middle of her words.

Makoto had come out from the darkness still clad in his Magic Armor and charged at Touda.

The charge and the arm of the Magic Armor that was swung at Touda, neither of them had touched her.

Makoto looks up.

The figure of Touda was there, with her shrine maiden outfit damaged here and there.

“...Hm. That ability to utilize fire, water, earth, wind, light, and darkness so freely. What was that she said about only being proud of her speed-ja? She has a mastery in everything but her specialties in close combat are with the sword and spear, fire and wind in magic, and her quality is, needless to say, speed. If that’s supposed to be a jack-of-all-trades, that’s a total show off-ja na.” (Tomoe) Tomoe had a face as if she wanted to say something, but after the words of Mio, she looked at the state of the shrine maiden and evaluated her power.

An existence that could do anything to the point that it felt like showing off.

Tomoe suddenly recalled Root as she thought of this.

“Ah, Waka-sama is planning on using Azusa.” (Shiki)

Shiki’s mutter.

Just like he said, Makoto had finally taken out his bow as he released Brides.

Touda blocked the Brides that came at her, creating a fire whip that was longer than before, she destroyed the Brides just before they are released by Makoto in a skillful manner as usual, but her state showed agitation.

Even if she tried to make the best use of her speed, she couldn’t find the correct timing with the accurate gatling sniping that was raining at her.

The concentration of the three followers and Touda was gathered on the arrow that Makoto was preparing.

And then...

“He is even using that?” (Tomoe)

As if wrapping up the place where Touda and Makoto are from both sides, what Tomoe referred to, were the silver arms that were opening their inorganic palms.

The space that was being wrapped, distorted in a strange manner.

The expression of Touda had distorted as well.

The blocking of the Brides had stopped, and the shrine maiden changed her defense into a concentrated barrier.

Of course, she wouldn't be able to defend against everything with only that, and wounds were slowly piling up.

The pair of arms steadily grew closer, and as the wrapped space became smaller, the distortion of the landscape in that space grew denser as if looking at it through lens.

The Brides of Makoto stop.

The shrine maiden was being smothered by something invisible, that's what her body showed was occurring.

It was clear that the arms were placing some sort of constraint in the space where Makoto and Touda are, but Makoto still maintained his stance holding his bow.

In time, the arms stopped in the place where the shrine maiden had been caught mid-air.

“He had her concentrate on the Brides and the bow, and then, sealed the movements of both sides huh. Splendidly done.” (Shiki) “We might be in a territory advantage, but it makes it even more interesting that Waka is able to maintain that refreshing face against an opponent of that level.” (Tomoe) “This was the obvious result-desu wa.” (Mio)

The shrine maiden has technically been deprived of her legs.

Looking at Makoto who had taken aim at her from the ground, Tomoe and the others had judged that this fight was over.



“It is over then.”

Looking at Touda who was caught in mid-air, I spoke to her.

I have already finished targeting her.

“...Uuugh. Not yet.” (Touda)

“That was an impressive display of physical strength and skill. You said you were the Wicked Fire General, and yet, you used things like ice and wind, and a variety of other stuff. I was truly nervous.” (Makoto) “Even if I am told this by Goshujin-sama who was able to handle all of it, it doesn’t sound convincing... It is true that I was once called Touda. Also...the fight is still in progress.” (Touda) “You still intend to continue? Leaving aside your stamina, your magic power seems to be practically empty already.” (Makoto) It is not completely exhausted, but the magic power that’s left in Touda is faint.

She had used quite a lot of big moves in succession.

She also threw in counters against my Brides.

If it were me, it would be another story, but using arias of big magic attacks like that in Asora and in succession, that’s not good.

The general spell arias, when they surpass a certain point, they borrow the magic power of their surroundings and from the spirits in order to form them.

Because it is not realistic to cover for the whole cost of magic power after all.

Using magic that drops you to the floor with only one use is way too impractical.

You picking a fight?

But Asora doesn’t have overflowing magic power in its air to begin with.

The grass, trees and animals already have a dense amount inside them, so thinking that this place has thick magic power is a misconception.

If you are careful and pay attention to your magic power, you would be able to tell.

That's why, to fight in this place normally with magic, there's the need for a peculiar method.

It seems like Touda didn't know that.

"I can still move, and I still have weapons remaining. I have not lost them all. I still intent to kill Goshujin-sama." (Touda) Words I could only feel bloodthirst from, were thrown at me.

Hah...

I was only planning on using it as a decoy, but it seems like I have no choice but to shoot once.

I was unable to imagine it piercing her, so I could only picture hitting her.

At the time with Senpai, it was strangely hard to do, but it seems like it isn't only my image that affects, there's probably another condition I still don't know of.

Yeah.

Hm...

"Then, sorry but, I will be hitting you." (Makoto)

"Victory can only be declared if you have, at the very least, incapacitated your opponent. Go ahead." (Touda) For a second, I felt like her eyes turned challenging.

Maybe she is truly a battle junkie just like Sofia?

It was a referral from Susanoo-sama and Daikokuten-sama, so it is a suspicion I can't simply discard as impossible.

Anyways, the battle is over.

I move my aim slightly away from Touda's chest and shoot her shoulder.

There was no scream.

She fell down just like that.

“I will heal you immediately. Good job.” (Makoto)

I call for Tomoe and the others.

“...It was my total lost. It was a splendid attack.” (Touda)

“I see. Ah, about your way of calling me, I don’t really like the sound of Goshujin-sama, so I want you to change it.” (Makoto) “What should I call you?” (Touda)

“Makoto, or...well, the one that everyone calls me with: Waka.” (Makoto) I am totally Waka-sama now after all.

It would be hard to change it now.

It is also true that I am getting used to being called that way.

“Understood. Then Makoto-sama, I may be inexperienced, but please take care of me.” (Touda) “Here as well. Ah Touda, there’s something I want to ask you.” (Makoto) I was going to ask her in the Shinto shrine, and I have just remembered it.

“What is it?” (Touda)

“The big tree that’s on the grounds, I saw a few on the road to the shrine as well, but...those are cherry blossoms, right?” (Makoto) “Yes. Unfortunately, there’s no Yoshino cherry blossoms, but there’s a few different types of cherry blossoms there.” (Touda) “As I thought. Then, is it okay to go cherry blossom viewing when the cherry blossoms bloom?” (Makoto) “Those grounds are Makoto-sama’s belonging. Please do as you please with it. It may be a bit too soon, but if you want, how about I have them bloom?” (Touda) For a conversation between a woman that is lying on the ground with an arrow pierced in her shoulder, it felt like an everyday talk, and that created a bizarre atmosphere.

However, there were words I couldn’t just let them slip by.

“Have them bloom, you say?” (Makoto)

“If it is a small thing like that, it is possible.” (Touda)

She said she was fire element, and yet, she had a diverse fighting style and was strangely skilfull in many fields.

Touda really must be only one of the many names she has.

But that helps me out.

“Then please do. I am feeling kind of nostalgic here you see. I was thinking it would be nice to go cherry blossom viewing with everyone.”
(Makoto) Bring everyone to check out the Shinto shrine, and do a cherry blossom viewing.

That’s two birds with one stone.

As we do a conversation like that, Tomoe and the others arrive.

There was no need for me to ask, Tomoe and Shiki begin Touda’s treatment.

“Good work, Waka-sama.” (Mio)

Mio gave me a towel.

I didn’t sweat, but since she went through the trouble of bringing it, I thank her and accept it.

Shinto shrine huh.

I direct my gaze towards the grounds.

There’s a Buddhist temple and a Parthenon temple as well, but they are probably not normal buildings.

I missed the chance to ask, so I should ask if they have some kind of outrageous function at another time.

...No well, I do think normal is best, but the shrine maiden-san here is like this after all.

But I am happy.

I can’t help feeling happy.

I don’t really know how exactly Shinto shrines are made, so I am truly happy that the end product suddenly appeared.

I will do a shrine visit every now and then, and in time, I want to try doing a festival as well.

I wonder if those kind of things will take root in Asora.

How should I explain it to everyone?

An unbelievable gift that came after the sea. I could feel my face was loosening from this.

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Chapter 226: Cherry blossom viewing party

And so...a few days passed after that.

Today, we are in the spacious grounds.

Right now we are literally in the middle of cherry blossom viewing.

The place was being filled with the merriness of drinking and singing.

At first, the residents were hesitant to eat and drink in a shrine that reveres Gods, but after a while into the cherry blossom viewing, they are completely enjoying it.

Explaining a variety of things probably played a big part as well.

Just that...even though this is the first cherry blossom viewing we will have, there were a number of sea races that were unable to participate.

This place isn't that far from the sea.

Even so, I can't move the shrine.

I was thinking about postponing the event because of that, but at that time, Serwhale-san requested me permission to expand the sea and reduce the land.

And said that we should do a cherry blossom viewing with everyone in the future after a few more times.

The Neptunes and Sari decided on the races that would be participating in the viewing this time, and has become a scene where the sea and land races are participating together.

Serwhale-san is currently drinking Sake, eating food, and enjoying the cherry blossom viewing with the land and sea races without exception.

...As I thought, Serwhale-san is truly worthy of being called as '-san'.

The crab people are beginning to dance, and the tuna people were earnestly looking at the cherry blossoms and the flowers as they drink the Japanese Sake of Asora in a small cup.

The other person that worked hard in this, Sari, was at my side in the beginning, but when I told her to move around the place, she obediently went to the many other races –centered mainly in women– and was enjoying herself in a calm manner.

Even now...eh? She is not there.

I search for Sari with my eyes.

...Oi.

I found Sari who is now sprawled at the top of a tree branch for some reason.

Ah, she is being brought down by the Lorelais.

This place has a large variety of drinks after all.

She probably drank a mix of things and got drunk.

It seems like there are people nursing them, so there's no need for me to go.

“An open and tolerant God, is it. It is certainly true that in Edo there were festivals at the Shinto shrines, and it had become a place where people gather and enjoy their time. It is a hard to comprehend part, but after doing it myself and seeing it with my own eyes, I am kind of beginning to understand.” (Tomoe) Tomoe is with me.

She is not the type that makes much of a racket. It seems she likes to do things in a calm manner.

Well, a cherry blossom viewing is something like that.

There are people that consider the cherry blossoms as a simple excuse to hang out, and there are people who truly enjoy looking at the cherry blossoms.

There are people that consider the drinking as the priority, and there are also people that prefer to go through the many food carts.

Sometimes people consider morning is better, some that night is.

Even so, there's no need to fight over it.

I think that people have different ways to enjoy things.

You don't need to get in the way of the enjoyment of others and just enjoy it in your own way.

"It is not like the people of the past viewed their God lightly and made a racket, okay? As long as you possess the emotion of respect as the root, I don't think the actions that come naturally from it are strange." (Makoto) That's how I think.

There are many unconventional festivals as well, but that doesn't mean we are looking down on the Gods.

Being merry doesn't equal to insurrection.

Of course, it is not only on the basis of respecting the Gods, and there's also the motivation that they will do their best on their next festival.

All of those points together make me like the festivals and the events in the Shinto shrines.

That's why I am happy that I was able to enjoy cherry blossom viewing in Asora even if it's slightly different.

If customary grand festivals and seasonal events are born, it would be great.

It has already been decided that there will be a gate connecting this Shinto shrine from the land and the sea.

This is something that I will definitely do.

I want them to visit the shrine at ease, and even if it is a religion, I don't want them to get lost or have people die like in the Ise pilgrimage.

"There's someone managing the place, and since the place is so spacious, it can even be used to teach the children." (Tomoe) "In my opinion, it doesn't need to turn into a learning place. I would be happy if it simply becomes one of the places where people can just enjoy their time." (Makoto) "Yes. Whatever the case, we have to be grateful for the Gods that have gifted us something nice." (Tomoe) Drinking her small cup of Sake, Tomoe looked satisfied.

Her change of mood is kind of...fast.

With the matter of the shrine maiden-san, Tomoe seemed to be kind of snappy, but right now, there's no signs of that.

Mio, who is mostly just by my side, was also like that, but right now, she is going around the various food carts and bringing me food.

Even though I am not sure if I can finish the stacked boxes of food that we brought for the cherry blossom viewing.

She really is merciless.

I thought I had eaten quite a lot, and yet, I feel like the amount of food has increased, and I am pretty sure it is not just my imagination.

I also feel like the stacked boxes of food are not matching the numbers of before...

"Well, Mio is enjoying herself in her own way, so that's fine huh."
(Makoto) Looking at Mio who is easily slipping through the tumult of people and drunks, I give up on the choice of eating everything.

I will just do my best to my utmost limit.

That's for the best, probably.

"Waka-sama, regarding the magic power that is being taken when paying visits to the shrine, it seems like it isn't to the point of bringing any harm to someone's health." (Shiki) "Shiki, I told you that it is fine to take a break from work right now. In the first place, Touda told us that already."
(Makoto) "However, it seems like there's differences between people and considering that it is not a set amount, I thought it would be best to investigate just in case..." (Shiki) "Well, yeah. Thanks, Shiki. For now, come drink and eat. Also, watching the many flowers that Touda has bloomed is kind of nice, you know?" (Makoto) Touda made the cherry blossoms bloom just like she said.

There are many varieties of cherry blossoms, and there's also the ones that only bloom in summer and fall.

In Japan, this spectacle can only be seen after growing them in a

greenhouse and setting up the appropriate environment, and yet, this view is being spread in this grounds and in the forest.

It is quite the sight.

People that like this could probably be able to stay here for several days looking at it.

“No! I have a mountain of things to do like investigate the vegetation of this land and the environment of this forest.” (Shiki) “Rejected. You will do cherry blossom viewing. Your work is done.” (Makoto) “B-But...” (Shiki)

“If Shiki is working, other people might begin doing it as well. That’s why, today is a holiday. You have done plenty enough with just the investigation regarding the shrine visiting.” (Makoto) “...Understood.” (Shiki)

Yup.

Shiki has an addiction with work.

I also have a lot of work that I have to prioritize over sleep, so I do understand his feelings though.

In my case, as long as there’s nothing real big, I will certainly be working everyday, but...I don’t think that’s the same as being an addict to work.

The words that Shiki says: ‘I am okay’ and ‘I have free time’, I am beginning to understand that taking those words of his in face value is dangerous.

How to say it, this disposition of his is contagious or should I say, birds of a feather flock together.

The subordinates of Shiki and the people that are closely related to him have the same trait.

Different from Tomoe and Mio, he was originally a hyuman, which is probably playing a big part in it.

Mio and Tomoe seem to have found sleeping as pleasant, but it looks like Shiki was not the type who liked sleep to begin with.

I remember him saying that when he became a Lich and was unable to sleep anymore, he was delighted.

Sadly to say, even when he made a pact with me and obtained a human body, for some reason, he still possesses that constitution of being okay even if he doesn't sleep –no, maybe it is more fitting to call it an ability.

It does seem like his workplace is the same, so I would like him to be a bit moderate with that special constitution of his.

For now, it looks like he is obediently doing cherry blossom viewing, but I am unsure if he will be able to hold for 30 minutes. It is Shiki after all.

“Touda, about the shrine visiting, I didn't ask the detailed parts like the differences between people and the issue that it isn't a fixed amount of magic power taken. There won't be any problems occurring with that, right?” (Makoto) After that fight on the name of a custom, we returned to the Shinto shrine with Touda, and we heard from her about the three temples counting the Shinto shrine.

From what she said, what I didn't know at all was about the part about the homage, worshipping, and praying; well, in other words, the parts that were done when praying in front of Gods.

Saying it simply, just like when someone pays homage in a shrine with money, you also consume magic power here.

“Of course. Well, there are always exceptions in everything, but regarding the difference in individuals, it is simply to consume magic power that's fitting depending on the capacity of the person. For people that have ten thousand, a hundred is taken: for people that have a hundred, one is taken. That's how it would work. So it would mean, the people would be offering around 1% of their total in normal visits.” (Touda) Touda was actively making contact with the residents.

When called, she would immediately appear close and answer, which was slightly mysterious.

The Orcs, Eldwas, Mist Lizards, Arkes, Winged-kin, Gorgons, and the fairies that are traumatized by Ema; it felt like she was going around

introducing herself to everyone.

Truly a business-like attitude.

Thinking about her role here and in the Kuzunoha Company, I feel like she has the disposition for deployment.

Just that, in my opinion, if I were to go head hunting for personnel, rather than people who are outstanding, I would prefer people that have reasonable skills and will be working together until the end.

I have finally noticed that those are the requirements I am looking for.

It is also because we haven't done the pact yet, but I feel like Touda is the former type.

I feel some sort of stiffness in her that's hard to express in words.

It doesn't only apply to her. I have felt this kind of thing a lot of times while in this world.

In the companies of the Showa era, being diligent was more important than skill when looking for personnel, but it is probably an old way of thinking in this era.

But leaving aside the seniority system, I am thinking about putting into practice the lifelong employments.

An enterprise.

Living that kind of lifestyle, we will do our very best and reward the employees for their service.

That's what I want to do.

Oops, my thoughts derailed.

"In that case, people like me would be offering quite a lot." (Makoto)
"Yes. But it shouldn't feel like a burden at all." (Touda)

"That's true. The first time we did the homage, I didn't feel anything after all." (Makoto) "Please do think of it as expendable magic power."
(Touda)

"Then what was that about the fixed amount and the exception you were

talking about?” (Makoto) “The answer would be the same. When it is a strong wish –a wholehearted wish– like for example; wishing for it every day several times, or taking years continuously wishing for it. Depending on the case, it might affect your very life.” (Touda) “When you make a wish so strong and wholeheartedly...” (Makoto)

“Yes. If you wish strongly, you will end up offering a large amount of magic power. Thinking about the belief of the people of Asora towards this Shinto shrine, I don’t think it will be possible.” (Touda) Wish for it strongly, moreover, they have to do it continuously for that to happen huh.

It is certainly true that this is a case that’s hard to consider in Asora.

“Right. It is true that there’s currently no need to worry about it.” (Makoto) I taught everyone that when they pay homage, they have to tell the Gods of their current objective. Towards a God they can’t see.

I told them that it was like a pledge to yourself.

Not the: ‘please make it come true’, but more like: ‘I am working hard in this objective, so please watch as I show satisfactory results’.

When they show results, they will come again and give their gratitude, and make their next pledge.

Also, I wanted them to have a different sensation of a God. Instead of that Goddess, it would be more like, a God that is close but you can’t touch. That kind of relationship.

“That’s how I think as well. Shiki-san’s worries are plausible, that’s why, I told him it is fine if he investigate as much as he wanted though.”

(Touda) “The magic power that is being offered will gather in a vessel, right? Is it fine to assume that the balls that you showed us are the divine vessels where it resides?” (Makoto) What Touda showed us as the divine vessels were two transparent clear balls and one ball that had a variety of colored lights inside it.

The transparent ones are the ones from the Buddhist temple and the Parthenon, and the one with light inside is from the Shinto shrine.

In other words, the light inside the ball is our magic power.

I was slightly bothered that it was all in the same ball.

Because the presence of those divine vessels should have differences between each other.

“The divine vessels, is it. Hm, there’s no problems with your interpretation, but strictly speaking, the vessels are more close to eggs. That ball will change its appearance as it accumulates magic power after all.” (Touda) “...Heh~.” (Makoto)

As expected of a unique Shinto shrine.

So it is its form before being born.

Well, that’s fine.

In the first place, having magic power sucked as you go paying homage is not normal anymore.

“...By the way, Makoto-sama, offering magic power when praying to Gods works the same way even in Earth. Actually, this world is the strange one for not taking this system.” (Touda) “Eh?!” (Makoto)

She read my mind?!

No, that’s not it. It is a system that’s used universally?!

No way that’s true!

“That’s way too farfetched. Even when I visited shrines in my world...” (Makoto) “Most humans are not aware of the very concept of magic power, so it is a matter of course. They don’t use it, and they can’t detect it. Even if they were to consume a small quantity of it, there won’t be any harm for humans. It is an amount that wouldn’t even need one day to recover after all.” (Touda) Seriously?

It is certainly true that I wasn’t aware of my magic power when I was in Japan.

So I have been offering magic power to the Gods every time I went to the shrine?

No, at the temple as well huh.

The church also?

Ah, now that I think about it, I haven't attended church once.

"For some reason, I feel like I have peeked at the dark side of the world."
(Makoto) "In a faraway future when magic power is known in Earth, there's the chance that they will learn of this reality." (Touda) "...Yeah."
(Makoto)

"But well, leaving aside that talk, regarding the divine vessel, I think it won't be long before it shows form. Just with Makoto-sama's magic power, it has already received an enormous amount after all. But when speaking of its completed form, it would still need a long time. I will report when there's some sort of change, so you can just enjoy yourselves." (Touda)
"Understood." (Makoto)

"Well then, I will go back to the residents to talk about Makoto-sama."
(Touda) "When the cherry blossom viewing is over, we will do the pact in the presence of Tomoe and the others. Remember that." (Makoto) "Yes. I am looking forward to the name I will be receiving." (Touda) Touda disappeared.

Oh, she appeared where the Gorgons are.

When it is with those people, talk about me just gives me a bad feeling though.

Even so, it will probably turn into a girls talk, so I don't think I want to hear it at all.

Talk between women is pretty toxic at times.

I can say for sure that it is without doubt something that's best for men to not hear.

Well, I have an older and younger sister, so in my own house, moreover, in my very room, I could hear fragments of those kind of talks.

That's why I know they are toxic.

Touda has most likely adapted to the Gorgons without any problems and enjoying a conversation with them.

There's no need to worry about that, so I decide not to mind anymore.

...The party is going at full swing huh.

Since coming here, I have gone to many countries and have met a variety of people, but as I thought, I like this place the best.

Everyone has different shapes and appearances, so in a glance, it feels like chaos itself though.

But I absolutely want to protect this place.

Asora can be considered the very tracks of my stay in this parallel world.

With that reason in mind, I felt like I had to burn this sight into my eyes.

“Waka-sama?” (Mio)

“Mio, we have enough food already—wait, what's that?” (Makoto)

It is Shiki.

There's no way I would mistake him.

But, why is Shiki under Mio's arm completely wasted?

“Please don't say that. I went to the place of the Orcs, and I felt quite the possibilities in this ‘Surprise foiled frying’. I thought Waka-sama should definitely try it once.” (Mio) “No Mio, I will gratefully eat that, but...what happened to Shiki?” (Makoto) “This? He had equipment prepared and was doing a secret talk with a number of people about entering the forest, so I brought him down.” (Mio) “Brou—” (Makoto)

“Even though we are having a cherry blossom viewing, this person really has no manners. I was discussing with Tomoe-san and Touda about having festivals like this every now and then –of course, it won't be as grand as this one– and we were planning on what date they would be, and yet, this Shiki is just...” (Mio) “Well, it is certainly true that it lacks manners. Yeah.” (Makoto)

Bringing him down is also questionable though.

Moreover, they are already talking about doing more of these festivals.

At some point in time, Tomoe was where Touda and the Gorgons are.

That must mean Mio was there not that long ago huh.

And, Mio saw that Shiki was planning on going to the forest.

“It would trouble the people if he were left on the ground, so I brought him here where there’s space. I will throw him somewhere where people can’t see.” (Mio) You are throwing him?

That means you are going to be throwing him at some random place, right?

No wait, don’t go throwing him.

Abandoning him is also a no.

“No, I will look after him. Let’s have him lie down.” (Makoto)

“No way, to have him rest on Waka-sama’s lap is just...!” (Mio)

Who said I would have him rest on my lap?!

I won’t do that!

That would only make it hard for me to move.

I see. Mio must have drunk quite a lot already.

I believe that she won’t get controlled by the alcohol, but her self-control might loosen slightly.

“No, I will just have him rest.” (Makoto)

“Then I will take his place!” (Mio)

She is not listening at all.

Well, this is also an everyday occurrence here, and a part of what I have done in this world.

But the nice mood about my determination I had going a while ago has been dampened a bit though.

Chapter 227: Source of Naivety

It is already the fourth time, so honestly, there's no freshness in it anymore.

For now, the most I am is relieved that the one in front of me is not Root.

There was no assurance that it wouldn't happen even if I didn't have the intentions of doing it myself after all.

On the contrary, there are times when I intend to do things but it doesn't turn out the way I want it to.

Serwhale-san is good to the point that I want to make him a follower, but there are things both of us have to consider, and couldn't reach the point of a pact.

Becoming a follower means that, at the very least, he will be separated from his race.

That person is a Neptune, and he is currently the pillar of Asora's sea.

It would be one thing if he were to just act together with me temporarily, but to form a pact and make him 'my' follower felt slightly bad.

Instead of establishing a standing for Serwhale-san with a pact, he said that it would be fine for him to just act as the representative of the sea residents and obey orders simply as one of the residents of Asora.

In terms of strength and standing, he who is the leader of the Neptunes, can even do something like being the manager of the sea, so turning him into my follower would actually be a waste.

There's no Superior Dragon who manages the sea.

And from what I have heard, the Neptunes existed since ancient times in the sea and are strong.

The Neptunes are a race that makes me wonder if they are actually the replacement of a Superior Dragon for the sea.

"Makoto-sama, what are you thinking?"

Within the magic circle that was drawn for the sake of the pact ritual, Touda talked to me.

She noticed that I was spacing out huh.

We are enveloped by a red light and are waiting for that light to settle down.

Even if we call it a ritual, it is not as if the concerned party will be doing anything.

That's thanks to Tomoe and the others who have advanced things promptly.

In the first time, Tomoe was the one who did the process, and in the time with Mio, I was unconscious.

At the time with Shiki, Tomoe and Mio schemed to mix Shiki with used rings, so I didn't have anything to do with that.

I truly haven't done anything in my pacts.

"No, I was just thinking that it has been a while since I have increased the numbers of my followers." (Makoto) "In order to not have Makoto-sama regret that decision, I promise to support you in private and public matters to the best of my abilities." (Touda) "Thanks." (Makoto)

I feel like I am hearing a marriage pledge here.

...

Even so, every single one of Touda's words didn't register as sincere inside of me.

Am I growing distrustful?

If we form a ruling pact, she won't be able to do anything drastic, and I do think that it would be impossible to attempt any vicious plans, but...

I probably can't be relieved just yet.

I am simply accepting this to a certain extent.

Of course, I am also expecting her to become a fighting force in our defenses.

Doubts.

...That's right, doubts.

Since I have noticed it myself, I can't just pretend I didn't.

The red light that is enveloping me and Touda had appeared as a wall between the space where Touda and I were facing each other.

The pact is finally over.

Signs that it has finished without any problems, and proceeded as always.

Now then, what shape will Touda take?

She looks human to begin with, so I guess her appearance won't change much.

Since it is a ruling pact, I don't think her human form will change.

I am the one that doesn't need to change form, so the light at my side settled down before hers.

“...”

I silently wait for the light at Touda's side to settle down.

I am thinking about calling her Sakura.

It may be simplistic, but she is in a Shinto shrine where there's cherry blossoms, and we are doing the pact in the day of the cherry blossom viewing, so I thought that name would be fine.

“Is this...my new body?” (Touda)

I was expecting it, but the naked Touda that was in a crouching position, stood up and muttered this.

What is this? Something is...

Touda casually stood up and looked at her lifted arms, and subsequently turned her gaze at her limbs.

I see, she looks young.

There's not much point in the age of their appearance, but Touda looked

quite older than me.

Right, like a girl in her mid-twenties.

And yet, her body had turned into that of someone around 10 years old.

Based on the indicator that I have created from the standards of this world with beautiful outward appearances, she is without doubt around 10 years old.

How to say it, this is a familiar sight.

Even when I look at the naked Touda right from the front, I was slightly moved by the fact that I wasn't agitated.

"How are you feeling? Are there any problems?" (Makoto)

"Makoto-sama...I am feeling excellent. I didn't think my power would increase this much with a ruling pact. It is a pity that my wish of fighting Makoto-sama at full-power will never become reality though." (Touda)
She is in a ruling pact after all.

Even if she had my permission, she wouldn't be able to fight with her full strength.

Tomoe and the others always complain about that a lot.

Saying that: 'If I could bring out my full power, I would be able to last a little longer.'

Touda, who said this devilishly while laughing, probably feels like that too.

"Rejuvenation. There's also the case of Shiki, so it isn't something strange." (Tomoe) "He turned from bones to human after all. If it is only turning your looks into a brat, there shouldn't be much difference." (Mio)
Tomoe and Mio were observing Touda with composure.

Tomoe looks slightly happy.

Well, that's understandable.

Aside from the change in Touda's looks and age of her outward appearance...there's her hair.

The color of her black hair had changed into a dark emerald green.

Like the color of a forest.

But her specialty is fire, and she served a God of Japan.

And yet, green.

Her black hair still looked more connected to her abilities, but this one is unexpected.

“As expected, she didn’t deviate from her human form.” (Shiki) Shiki seems to have been thinking the same as me. He looks at Touda with serious eyes as he mutters.

Touda confirms her own look, and after nodding a few times, she mutters a chant and puts on her shrine maiden clothes.

So there’s magic to change quickly?

How convenient.

“Well then, Makoto-sama, I wish to receive my name.”

“Right. Touda’s new name will be: Sa—” (Makoto)

“?”

I was about to say Sakura, but for some reason, I stopped.

Because a different name suddenly flashed in me.

What should I do?

No.

Sakura is no good.

I was already feeling uncomfortable with it.

I feel like conferring a name like that to someone is no good.

“Waka?” (Tomoe)

“Waka-sama?” (Mio)

Tomoe and Mio looked at me, who was hesitating in speaking, with worry.

“Sorry. Your new name will be: Tamaki.” (Makoto)

“Tamaki...is it.” (Tamaki)

“Yeah. Once again, best regards.” (Makoto)

Why did the name Tamaki suddenly appear?

There wasn't a single of my acquaintances with that name though.

“Yes. Makoto-sama, senpais, from today on, my name will be Tamaki. Please take care of me.” (Tamaki) Touda lowers her head deeply –no, Tamaki.

My new follower.

However, she is clearly a follower with a different implication to that of Tomoe and the others.

“...Then, Tomoe. I leave the rest to you.” (Makoto)

“Yes, I will properly teach her the rules of Asora. We will be using her in the future, so I will teach her about the Mist Gate as well—” (Tomoe)

“About that, it is fine to just teach her how to move around Asora with it.” (Makoto) “What do you mean by that, Waka?” (Tomoe)

Without answering, I just wave my hand and turn my back.

“I will leave for a bit. If the cherry blossom viewing continues till the night, please let them, okay? I will also return when it is night.” (Makoto) Telling them this, I disappear from the place.

I teleport to my room and make some half-hearted preparations before heading to the wasteland.

Teleporting to the place where there was a base once called Zenno, I flew to a certain direction.

Maybe because there are a lot of mamonos around here that can feel to a certain extent if it is an opponent they can handle, there were no encounters, and in less than an hour, I arrived at my objective.

“If I remember correctly, it was around here.” (Makoto)

As far as one can see, there's reddish-brown ground with no change in

sight.

The place where my parallel world life began.

It truly has nothing to the point of being funny.

And, even in this border of the world, I was able to reach here in a short amount of time.

That reality felt kind of amusing and made me want to laugh.

“Thinking about it, time has passed in the blink of an eye huh.”

(Makoto) A monologue that no one would hear.

Since coming to this parallel world, I was attacked by Tomoe, obtained something called Asora, was attacked by Mio...

Thinking so many times that I should change, I have reached this point without changing my foundations.

...That's what I intended.

I have...changed.

Before I noticed, I had changed.

At the very least, I have become a completely different being from the me in Japan.

If there's hostility and are coming for my life, there's no problem in fighting back, and as a result, I have taken lives, which is something that can't be helped.

If it's thoughts of only that extent, it might have been normal.

But the current me is different.

I now think that battles to the death are as normal as breathing.

At first, it was only towards people that directed killing intent towards me.

A little bit in the past, all the people that had the will of fighting and were standing in the battlefield.

And now, almost all the lives that have been born.

I have ended up thinking that it is only natural to kill and be killed.

Hyumans and demi-humans have been taking away lives just by being alive after all.

Adventurers being controlled by greed and getting killed by mamonos, mamonos swarming into a village and killing everyone in it; I have begun thinking that they are the same thing.

If it were in my time at Japan as a high school student, I wonder if I thought of lives this lightly.

Since when was it?

Since the time when variants ran rampant in Rotsgard?

Or was it the time when I was unable to fight back against the Goddess and was made to fight in the capital of Limia in the end?

Was it when I was visiting a variety of countries along with the demon race country?

I don't know.

It might even be by the time when we were talking about raising animals like cows and sheeps in Asora and I had grown able to eat them like normal.

But, the time when I clearly felt this change was slightly after my conversation with Senpai in Limia.

My thoughts regarding the lives in a battle, I began feeling that my thoughts were totally different compared to many of the soldiers.

Honestly, I am beginning to feel like morals are something faint.

This is scary.

The surface of my thoughts should feel that morals and life are important, but deep inside, it feels as if it isn't resonating at all. A bizarre feeling.

Maybe that's why the times when I fall into deep thought have increased.

I have consulted with Tomoe and the others about matters of the company and Asora, but talks about me are a different matter.

Matters regarding what I should do with myself, isn't something that should be consulted with someone else.

This is something that I should decide myself.

There's no need for the input of others, no matter who it is.

"If the cause was because I have killed too much, I can't turn back anymore. It would be something that can't be helped." (Makoto) The result of me killing too much is that now I feel it is the same as breathing and it is something that's closely related to me. If that's the case, it is already too late.

Because it is already that way after all.

"Well, it is not like I can't act normally. It is not impossible to act within reason, so that should be fine." (Makoto) No matter how much worth I find in life, I can still consider life as important.

Leaving aside people that I am deeply connected with, most people probably wouldn't be able to notice.

"The problem is the other point. A problem that doesn't concern only me. This one is the bad news." (Makoto) The other problem I noticed when thinking about myself.

That is...there's something I have been purposely avoiding.

I do feel like I have been doing it unconsciously as well, and there are times when I did it purposely.

In other words, a serious illness.

I...

"I have been running away from evil." (Makoto)

The evil intent that's directed at me from others.

The evil that's distributed unfairly in society.

Even in Japan, and in this parallel world as well.

I have been running away from it.

If it came to facing it, I chose to shut down my thoughts and silence it.

Even in my future, I was simply thinking about succeeding the bow dojo of master and live a life where I taught the arts of the bow and continued training myself. That's how I thought.

In terms of marriage, I was thinking that I would simply marry someone at an adequate age.

Of course, I didn't have a specific person in mind.

If succeeding the dojo was not possible, I was thinking about possibly working as a civil servant at my hometown. Anyways, I only thought of it vaguely.

I couldn't picture myself competing against people for things like promotions, and I thought that those things didn't suit me.

There was no point in thinking about it, and I am no genius or prodigy, so I thought it wasn't something that I should aim for.

...I was fine with life by simply having my bow and my hobbies.

That's how it was.

This didn't change even when I came to a parallel world.

At first, I thought that I was simply running away from the difficult things, but I was able to absorb things like the world's history and the configuration of magic, so it is probably something different.

The evil of adventurers, the merchants' evil; in this world where greed is covering its whole surface, there have been times when those schemes were pointed at me, and there were many times when I was involved in them.

At those times, even when I made countermeasures for it, I always coped with it in a half-hearted manner and ignored the root of it.

Or at times, I would just leave it to Tomoe and the others.

At the time with Rembrandt-san and the curse disease, it was specially

dreadful, but even in that time, I wasn't really that interested in the cause of it.

What I thought was that it wouldn't be funny for people to die from something like that.

Even the strange accusations of Illumgand who was like a half-psychotic person, I didn't pay him much attention.

Because he wasn't someone that posed a threat. Even so, if he were to attack with force, I would fight back, that's all.

I didn't direct my eyes to the background of the story.

Because you know, no one would want to touch a muddy business like that.

If possible, you would prefer to just live your life without knowing.

Right?

If I had decided on things faster, would things have taken a different turn?

Even to this day, I still think about those trivial things.

Just how pointless this is. I have already understood this well since coming to this world.

"The eyes of Touda...of Tamaki, were the eyes of evil." (Makoto) I think it was a complex color of emotions.

Even if I call it evil, I think it is not only that.

There was clearly fear and good will as well.

But there was malice too.

How to say it, it was that strange atmosphere –that strong pressure. Now that I think back on it, I feel like it was similar to the sensation when the Goddess told me to do something unreasonable, and when I first met Rona and Zef.

That's right. Those were the eyes of someone suppressing something.

‘The day has finally arrived where I see those kind of eyes in Asora’, is what I thought at that moment.

That it was already too late.

“...That’s why I won’t let Tamaki out of Asora. I will have her become a follower that will defend Asora to the very end.” (Makoto) With that, her malice will not become that much of a problem.

We have formed a pact already after all.

I will have her manage the Shinto shrine and the temples normally, so it will be killing two birds with one stone.

“...Well then, let’s go.” (Makoto)

At the place where it all began, a resolution was made.



“Oh! Raidou-dono, it’s been long.”

“It’s been long, Rembrandt-san. Even though I am being rented a room, I don’t show up much. I apologize for that.” (Makoto) “No need to mind. We also wanted to talk to you –no, consult with you about something, so I was thinking of asking you when you were available.” (Rembrandt) Evening.

I had gone to the Rembrandt residence in Tsige.

When I tried to make an appointment in order to meet him as fast as possible, I received an answer from the receptionist saying that they would make time for this evening.

To think that I would be able to meet a busy person like him in the very same day.

“Consult? Rembrandt-san with me? Could it be something happened to your daughters?” (Makoto) I haven’t done anything strange to Sif and Yuno, and I haven’t informed those two about anything that I would feel ashamed of.

If it is a consultation from them, there’s no real need to be so formal

about it.

“No, they are living a fulfilling everyday life. Thanks to Raidou-dono.”
(Rembrandt) “I am happy that you think that way.” (Makoto)

“Of course I do. And so, Raidou-dono, what is your business? It would be great if I can be of assistance.” (Rembrandt) If he can be of assistance huh.

From what I know, he is the most suitable for it.

Probably.

“You see...” (Makoto)

With a slight pause, I harden the resolve inside of me.

“Please teach me the evil of people.” (Makoto)

“...Hoh? Evil, is it. This is one strange request.” (Rembrandt) “Evil, or how to say it, society, maybe? I don’t know how to describe it. I do have a clear image in my mind though...” (Makoto) I could tell that the eyes of Rembrandt-san and Morris-san, who was beside him, had narrowed.

I think they understood the true meaning of my words.

“Until now, I have been having an idealistic view about merchanting, and...I have pushed through things with brute strength. But I am already in a phase where I can’t keep my eyes away. That’s how I felt.” (Makoto) “But Raidou-dono has been able to bring about the best possible result in that way. There’s rarely any merchant who would be able to only look at his customers and be able to achieve as much as you walking such a path.” (Rembrandt) “That’s right, Raidou-sama. You have expanded your business in a way that other people wouldn’t be able to and obtained the satisfaction of your customers. And even now, you are receiving direct calls from countries, and reached a level where your name has been remembered. This is something to be proud of.” (Morris) Morris-san and Rembrandt-san gave consolation words towards my self-deprecating confession.

It is certainly true that my name has been remembered in other

countries, and, I can't say it but, I also have connections with the demon race.

Somehow, my life as a merchant is going well.

But that's merely somehow.

"I am not thinking about changing the foundation of my methods. I simply want my company to become one that's able to deal with conflicts not by coincidence, but by predicting and overcoming them. And I think I can't continue averting my eyes from the evil of other people, even if only a bit." (Makoto) Look at reality, and learn more about the dirtiness of people that I have been trying not to see before but ended up seeing.

As a result, I might end up seeing not only humans but demi-humans in a dirtier manner as well.

In order to change the impression the companies, merchants, and nobles have of me, I can't continue relying on Tomoe and the others for everything.

If I –their representative– continue like this, the company will simply be seen as a company that can't be crushed.

In order to make people think that the very notion of touching Kuzunoha Company is a taboo, I as the representative am the bottleneck that is making it unable to realize this notion.

I have to throw away this naivety of mine.

How many times I have thought of doing this.

But finally...I have understood what I have to do to make this possible.

This time for sure, I will do it.

It was...naive of me, trying to avert my eyes.

"...And so, you wanted me to teach you about the darkness that I have been carrying inside of me as a merchant, right?" (Rembrandt) "Yes." (Makoto)

"There are times when knowing leads to regret. I am certain that Raidou-

dono is able to push away all those people that have petty emotions of defeat, and continue moving forward as you do, but...even so, you still want to learn? Even though you have fulfilled an important condition to make it possible for you to abandon thoughts and simply advance in an idealistic manner?" (Rembrandt) "...Yes. It is not only limited in my merchant life, but also in my life in general. This isn't something I can continue running away from." (Makoto) "If it's you, it is possible... But well, Raidou-dono has decided this himself, so it isn't something that others can just interject in huh." (Rembrandt) Rembrandt-san does a short sigh and shuts his mouth.

I also have no choice but to wait for his answer.

Rembrandt-san was pondering with his eyes closed, and when he nods, he opens his eyes and looks at Morris-san.

Morris-san quietly nods.

"...Understood. I will teach you what I can, about the thoughts that overflow in society, and its foundation. Whether it is good luck or bad luck, there's a mountain of teaching materials regarding that in Tsige. However, this is a personal request of mine, Raidou-dono: Please continue your approach towards your customers as always." (Rembrandt) "Yes. Rembrandt-san, thank you very much!" (Makoto)

"But to think that Raidou-dono would say himself that he would want to become a normal merchant, I wouldn't have expected it." (Rembrandt) In an instant, Rembrandt-san returned to his gentle expression, and strength left his body as he laughs.

"I-Is that so." (Makoto)

"Even in Rotsgard, you have gained control by brute strength after all. I was getting more and more excited about your future, Raidou-dono. I didn't expect you to stumble." (Rembrandt) "In my perspective, I have been stumbling quite a lot though." (Makoto) My business in the Academy didn't give me the impression that it was going better than in Tsige.

"Different from here, there's no assurance that the Guild will take your

side after all.” (Rembrandt) “That’s true. Compared to Tsige, I felt like forming connections with the Guild and the merchants was more difficult.” (Makoto) “Hahaha.” (Rembrandt)

Rembrandt-san let out a laugh that felt had a hidden meaning.

Morris-san also had the same expression as he nodded several times.

...

“Ah, and so, what is the business Rembrandt-san had? I still haven’t heard it.” (Makoto) I felt slightly uncomfortable, so I changed the topic.

“Nothing big, Compared to the resolve of Raidou-dono, this is but a small matter.” (Rembrandt) Maintaining his pleased expression, he placed his elbows on the table and linked his arms on top of his mouth.

Those gestures of his that felt like an act, had intensity.

I silently waited for his next words.

“There will be a revolution occurring soon in this country. I was going to consult you regarding that.” (Rembrandt) “Hah? Revolution?” (Makoto)

Eh?

Chapter 228: Studying at once

By revolution, is he referring to the one that changes society? That revolution?

Rembrandt-san nodded when I asked for confirmation, so there's no mistake.

When he said 'this country', did he refer to the Aion Kingdom?

In other words, people that can start a revolt against the royalty have appeared.

...Eh? Isn't that a big deal?

Why is Rembrandt-san so calm?

"That's right, a revolution. Regarding the details, I will be telling you as I teach Raidou-dono, but well, in terms of the time...I think it will start moving by summer." (Rembrandt) "Summer?! T-There's already less than a half a month left!" (Makoto) Even if Aion Kingdom is not a frontline country that is fighting directly with the demon race, it is one of the four major powers.

If a big country, that's at the rear and is in an alliance with Limia and Gritonia, begins a civil war, it would be no time to do war with the demon race.

No no no.

Isn't this a lot more important than my resolve?

If this country falls into civil war, even Tsige might get enveloped in the flames of war.

I don't want to think this is true but...could it be that this is also related with the demon race?

"Hahaha, an organization that has been caught before doing their move, wouldn't be able to do anything big like a revolution anyways. Catching them with a margin of half a month is already superb, Raidou-dono." (Rembrandt) "By the way, this matter was not orchestrated by the demon

race. It is not like they are completely unrelated, but they are not deeply related either.” (Morris) Morris-san read my mind.

Even so...I think that a big affair like a revolution happening in half a month is outrageous, and I think that half a month passes by quickly.

That’s what I think, but...

It seems like Rembrandt-san and Morris-san think that half a month is plenty enough time.

“And so, what did you want to consult with me regarding the revolution?” (Makoto) “Umu. I will be direct. I want you to witness and hear your opinions about the way Tsige will move at that time.”

(Rembrandt) The way Tsige...will move?

“And I wanted to hear about Raidou-sama’s thoughts regarding this revolution. That’s what it would be.” (Rembrandt) “My thoughts, is it.” (Makoto)

In the first place, I don’t know much of Aion Kingdom.

Frankly speaking, aside from Tsige, I don’t know of this country.

If I remember correctly, it is a country that excels in information gathering, and their cavalry unit.

That’s the most I know.

“Sorry but, I don’t know the condition of Aion Kingdom itself, so I don’t have any sort of opinion in it.” (Makoto) Thinking about it once, I spoke my honest thoughts.

This isn’t the moment to try looking good.

“That’s fine.” (Rembrandt)

“Hah?”

“No well, that way is better, is how I should say?” (Rembrandt)

“Uhm...”

“If you had an opinion regarding this country itself with knowledge beforehand, I would of course want to hear that as well. However, what I

want to hear more than that is how Raidou-dono views 'revolution' itself. It would be strange to call this a normal revolution but, Raidou-dono, what do you think about this?" (Rembrandt) So that means it doesn't have to be centered in Aion huh.

A revolution.

It is a vague image, but it would mean that the tops of the country would change, right?

Mainly by force or by illegal methods.

And if as a result, the revolution is successful, the government and economy will change as well.

If asked what I think about it, it would be that the allies will change depending on the times and society.

If the government was good, there wouldn't be a revolution to begin with, so if a bad government was going rampant, a revolution is a valid path for change.

There would be a lot of side-effects because of it, but...I wouldn't say it is completely wrong.

In that case, my thoughts about it would be that depending on the situation, it is a valid method.

"I don't think it would be the correct method in all situations, but I do think that there's times when a revolution is necessary." (Makoto) "Hoh!" (Rembrandt)

"That's..." (Morris)

I thought they wouldn't like this incredibly vague answer of mine, but the reaction of the two was of simple surprise.

"Did I say anything strange?" (Makoto)

"...No. I was just surprised that you didn't consider revolution as evil." (Rembrandt) "If the government is corrupt, a revolution is bound to occur. I think there's times when that happens. And when it is a revolution in those cases, I think it is something necessary." (Makoto) "You see, a king

that rules over the country, is someone that has been given the right by God to do it.” (Rembrandt) The Goddess huh.

But that’s quite the valid way of thinking.

Like, the king has the right, so he can rule the country.

How was it called?

I remember I learned it in world history.

...The divine right of kings?

Ah right, that’s the one.

In the case of this world, it actually happens, so it is not a simple expedient though.

“Meaning, the temple and the general populace think of revolution as absolute evil.” (Morris) Morris-san supplements the explanation.

I see.

That’s why my way of thinking that ‘it is necessary depending on the situation’ is already heresy in itself huh.

Let’s be careful about that from now on.

In the first place, this is the first time I have talked about the topic of revolution, so I doubt there will be more times to come.

“In that case, I have said something bad. Sorry, I will be careful.” (Makoto) “No, I think Raidou-dono is in the right. But well, it isn’t something that you can disclose in public, so you are correct in taking note of it.” (Rembrandt) “Haha, thanks.” (Makoto)

“Fumu. But with this, it has made it a lot easier to say.” (Rembrandt) “So true.” (Morris)

It seems like Rembrandt-san and Morris-san were saying something to each other with their eyes.

Is it my imagination? Even when we are in the reception room, it feels kind of stormy here.

“Rembrandt-san? Could it be...you are participating in that revolution?”
(Makoto) I nervously ask this.

I heard from him before that he wouldn't become a merchant that profits from war, but if he was in favor of the revolutionary forces' believes, it is plenty possible.

Because he wouldn't profit from it after all.

“I am unrelated.” (Rembrandt)

“Ah, I see.” (Makoto)

“Currently, that is.” (Rembrandt)

“ ...”

“Later, I will give you the documents pertaining the revolution that will be occurring in Aion. Well, if I had to summarize it, I would say, they are an amusing bunch of idiots.” (Rembrandt) “Isn't that no good then?”
(Makoto)

“Umu, that's right. It is no good. This is something that's felt daily in the government officials of Tsige as well, but it is truly no good at all.”
(Rembrandt) “Yeah...” (Morris)

It wasn't me but Morris-san who nodded seriously.

Rembrandt-san emphasized that it was 'no good' twice, but is it that much?

I have not seen the government officials appointed in Tsige, but if they are people evaluated in this way, it is probably for the best that I didn't meet them.

“Raidou-dono, do you know who Tsige belongs to?” (Rembrandt)

Rembrandt-san asks me while maintaining that tired expression.

Well, I at least know that much.

“If I remember correctly, a noble...I think it was the fourth prince.”
(Makoto) He is still young.

If I count the time since I heard this, he is probably 6 years old now.

“That’s right. The current king had given this land to this fourth prince he dotes on so much, soon after he was born.” (Rembrandt) Tsige was gifted to a baby?

That’s pretty sad.

In that case, the king owned this town before that.

“So until then, Tsige was owned by the king, right?” (Makoto)

Is it a territory that is in direct control of the country?

Well, since it is a gift from father to son, there’s probably not going to be nobles who would take it away from him, so in a sense, it is valid.

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

“W-What is it?” (Makoto)

When I asked for a confirmation, the two of them simple stared at me silently.

Unable to take it anymore, I speak out, and Rembrandt-san did a small sigh and began speaking.

“This Tsige is the second most prosperous land in Aion. This is a number simply going by the payment of taxes though.” (Rembrandt)

“Heh~” (Makoto)

That’s impressive.

It is certainly true that it is a lively place and it is in the wasteland as well.

The transit of people is intense, and I did know that it had power as a town, but to think that it was the number two town in Aion for their payment of taxes even when they are a remote region like this.

“The primary disadvantage is the distance it has from the capital, but in terms of population, economic scale, its location of being the entrance to the wasteland, being the ending point of the Golden Highway, and the adventurers’ quality; the worth of this town cannot be measured.”

(Rembrandt) "Right." (Makoto)

"And the king has given the rights of this town to a kid that literally doesn't have the ability to do anything." (Rembrandt) Ah.

I see.

Now I understand the reason of why Rembrandt-san is dismayed.

Conferring the rights of Tsige to someone, means that the person who conferred it holds incredible authority.

Giving authority like that to a kid would only stir the people around into having disagreeable thoughts, and in the first place, it wouldn't serve as anything good for that kid.

No matter how cute that kid was, this is not a correct decision for a father to his son.

To bring your fondness into governmental affairs is not good.

"And then?" (Makoto)

"A king that would do something as stupid as throwing away his own authority. Even though he is already in a complicated position where he has so many children that it is creating problems regarding the successor, he still did something as stupid as that. If he was aiming for that when he did it, then he is quite the schemer." (Rembrandt) "From the sound of it, he wasn't aiming for it." (Makoto)

"Even though he is still in good health, he easily relinquished a town that offers money to the country as if it were trivial. He did that, and yet, he didn't place a capable and loyal subordinate as a set for this action of his. I can understand the emotions of the people that want to cause a revolution. At those times, I send people disguised as aborigines and attacked him night after night." (Rembrandt) ...A-Attacked him.

Just how pissed were you?

It is true that it was gifted to a child, but it is not like their everyday life would change.

"...Since then, the newly appointed government officials were all nobles

that have been influenced by the mother of the fourth prince and has been changing constantly in that way. This type of people are not rare in the nobles, but they were all people that only sucked off this town as much as they wanted.” (Morris) Morris-san complemented the explanation once again.

Well, that’s something.

The worries must have piled up at mach speed.

It truly affected the daily life of the people.

No wonder he wanted to punch him.

Well, it is not like Rembrandt-san himself is punching the king. It is simply his aborigin disguised people that are secretly punching him, so Rembrandt-san probably held back quite a lot.

If those government officials don’t know about what was happening to the king, it would simply be releasing stress after all.

“Petty officials that are crazy in the head, and idiotic generals, that have muscle for brains, were coming and going. It was a crisis that remained in the history of Rembrandt company. Seriously, there’s a limit to doting on your children.” (Rembrandt) “A crisis that would remain in the history of the company?” (Makoto) But I feel like Rembrandt-san is also the type who doesn’t have a limit when doting his children though.

“They tried to put their hands on my wife and daughters, and after receiving strange marriage proposals, I judged it had already surpassed the limit and did a few things. Anyways, they were noisy about raising the taxes and demanding money, you see. No matter how much you try being rational with them, talking with that bunch just doesn’t work. They always say: ‘Understood. Then, when can you ready the money?’” (Rembrandt) I have dealt with people like that from time to time. The type of people that understand words but conversation is useless huh.

Those kind of people are annoying.

In my case, I could just have Tomoe and Shiki deal with them and ignore it, and it would be resolved later, but how do you deal with people like that

in reality?

Anyways, tax huh.

I know that Rembrandt-san is a merchant that possesses incredible power in this town, but he was someone that could even participate in the decision of the taxes?

I feel like that surpasses the domain of a single company.

“Taxes, is it. But in that case, wouldn’t it be a lost cause if the government officials just decide for it to be that way?” (Makoto) “If it were the usual, then it would be just as Raidou-dono says. But they are people as well. It is possible to indoctrinate our side’s thoughts into them. The most simple method is to entertain them.” (Rembrandt) Entertain huh.

Entertain the government officials, hear their thoughts, request of them, and place your own side’s thoughts in them.

I see.

“Entertain, is it. Then the taxes were also dealt with at that time?” (Makoto) “Omitting the details of it, yeah, that’s right.” (Rembrandt)

“It is thanks to master that Tsige only has to face the current amount of tax burden, Raidou-sama.” (Morris) “By the way, what’s the tax currently?” (Makoto)

“The visible rate is 30%, counting the personnel and goods, 10%. In total, it would be around 40% of our income most of the time.” (Rembrandt) 40%.

Since he mentioned the other 10% is not visible, that means the residents view it as a 30%.

Even so, it is still a pretty impressive number.

If you gain 10, 4 of it would be taken and you would only be left with 6.

But from how Morris-san said it, it seems like even this is already good, so this place must be in the normal boundaries or lighter.

I wonder how much is the normal amount.

For the people paying, it would be best if it were closer to zero, but if that were the case, the community service would become worse.

“40%.” (Makoto)

“The nobles wanted to make it at least 70% though. If that happened, the town might dry to its death –even if it’s Tsige. This is simply my personal opinion based on experience, but once the tax surpasses half of the income, it only brings negative results.” (Rembrandt) 70% is just too exaggerated.

There’s no way someone would be able to live that way.

Even the desire to work would be gone with a 70%.

Moreover, what’s that about ‘at least 70%’.

Did they want to make it even higher than that?

But the topic about half being the limit, that Rembrandt-san speaks of, also sounds unreasonable.

“That’s terrible. But how were you able to turn that unreasonableness into 40%?” (Makoto) “Simple. From the 70% that they want to take, we pay the other 30% from our own pockets as bribe money. It is not like we have become saints or anything. If the town dies, we wouldn’t leave unscathed either. And in the first place, I carry a considerable amount of responsibility for this town.” (Rembrandt) When Rembrandt-san mentioned: ‘Carrying responsibility’, his expression turned complicated.

While showing strong determination, there was also regret, sorrow, and affection mixed in it. Something that the current me would definitely be unable to make.

He has lived in this town for a long time, experienced a lot of things, and worked on his company here, so he probably has a strong attachment to it.

Even so, the bribe is most likely an outrageous amount.

I feel like it would be best to not ask the amount of gold.

“It must have been quite the severe battle.” (Makoto)

“Yeah. Right now it has calmed down though. And so, there’s the background of it as well. The current state is that we are stuck with that crazy bribe amount, and we also have to help in gathering confidential information. Because of that, not only the Rembrandt company, all the companies in Tsige have a bad impression of the Aion Kingdom.”

(Rembrandt) “I understand that sentiment.” (Makoto)

Or more like, it would be a mystery if they were able to pledge loyalty to a kingdom like that.

That would be impossible.

Even I am beginning to think if Aion Kingdom is okay doing all this.

“And so, regarding this time’s plan for revolution, I haven’t reported it to the country yet.” (Rembrandt) “?!”

“If I were to report it now, the revolution will probably end as a small insurrection.” (Rembrandt) He has no intentions of reporting it.

In other words, he plans on having the revolution occur.

“Experiencing this upheaval that has lasted for about one year, looking at this Tsige that has been changing each passing day, my way of thinking has changed quite a bit you see.” (Rembrandt) “...”

I am most likely one of the reasons why.

The change of Tsige, as well as the one who changed Rembrandt-san’s way of thinking.

I can tell that I am involved in it.

“I have been thinking this since a long time ago. I wonder, are the country and nobles really necessary for the government and management of a town?” (Rembrandt) “...”

In the case of Tsige, nobles take turns coming to this town and supervise it for several years before leaving.

Moreover, it seems like they don’t do much work.

In that case, with how the current Tsige is, even if the nobles are gone,

the government and the administration would have no problems.

But if they maintain that, Tsige would be disconnecting itself from the Aion kingdom.

Looking at it in terms of security, I feel like it would turn into a minus.

No matter how you pick it, Aion Kingdom is still one of the major powers.

Rembrandt intends to turn Tsige independent.

He intends to use the revolution that will occur in Aion as the trigger.

As long as it is viewed as a town that creates a lot of wealth, even if they are in a remote region, the Aion Kingdom will most likely not accept something like independence.

That's why it has to be now.

"It is still not even at the level where we can question if there's form as a nation though. At present, we plan on forming a municipality with several representatives of households, and first have Tsige reborn into an independent land. In my perspective, this is something that has steadily become more of a realistic goal as time goes on, but Raidou-dono, what are your thoughts?" (Rembrandt) An independent land.

As I thought.

Rembrandt-san knows the exact population of Tsige, the percentage of food supply that can be self-supported, the fighting force that can be dispatched at once, the amount of goods coming and going from the wasteland, and the connection it has with the surrounding towns.

Lately, I heard that Mio and Shiki have been staying quite a long time in the port town that has been developing, and have been exchanging things with a good amount of people.

From my view, Rembrandt-san is a merchant with plenty experience.

If a person like that has reached the point where he asks someone like me, he probably has already received implicit consent from his surroundings or obtained a promise for cooperation.

He is definitely not the type that would put his greed and wishes as the priority and do something unreasonable, and yet, he has laid bare his thoughts of independency, which means, he most likely has a proper amount of confidence and foundation for independence.

Of course, if possible, I want to help him out.

But if he is putting his confidence in my Kuzunoha Company, then that would be slightly troublesome.

“In my eyes, Tsige is the place where I began my business for real. It is like a second homeland to me. If separating from Aion is connected to the benefit of this town, I am personally in favor of it. But I currently am not able to declare how much cooperation I will be able to provide.” (Makoto)
If it drags the Kuzunoha company as well, I can’t make a prompt decision.

I will first discuss this.

That’s my standard.

This time it is just deciding how much we will cooperate, so in essence, my position in this has already been mostly decided.

But to promise what I will be doing at this moment, wouldn’t be good.

“You don’t have any intentions of being on the kingdom’s side?”
(Rembrandt) “Nope, I don’t.” (Makoto)

No chance of that.

There’s no reason at all for me to betray Tsige.

It is the homeland of Lime, and the people working here are being well treated.

“Fuh...Is that so. So at the very least, you will support the idea utilizing the revolution to gain independence.” (Rembrandt) Rembrandt-san looked relieved as he smiled.

That’s cruel.

Was he thinking I would become scum or something?

“I don’t have any obligations for Aion kingdom to the point of betraying

Tsige.” (Makoto) “I do know that. Just that, if the very idea of utilizing the revolution in order to gain independence went against the believes of Raidou-dono, I was thinking about abandoning the idea of independence.” (Rembrandt) “...To do something like that because of me is just...” (Makoto)

“That’s why Morris and my close aides had discussed for several days things like: the methods to evacuate the people that hate fighting, and the protection of people that are not fit for battle, in order to convince Raidou-dono.” (Rembrandt) “Aha...hahahaha. There’s no need to mind me. If it’s Rembrandt-san, you should be able to do those kind of things.” (Makoto) In order to convince me alone, the tops of Rembrandt company gathered and did meetings.

What’s that? That’s not funny.

If I remember correctly, it was Sofia, right? The one who could destroy a few countries on her own.

Being treated as that kind of existence by a part of the people. What a complicated feeling.

Even for Rembrandt-san, I probably look like a jack-in-the-box.

“It is certainly true that I thought it more thoroughly while having Raidou-dono in mind. Also...even if it’s not facing the country directly, we are still going against a major power, so we have to think about a lot of things.” (Rembrandt) ...That way of thinking about ‘a lot of things’ is something that I have abandoned as well.

Even if it’s impossible immediately, I will have to learn one step at a time.

...

“In other words, this is truly a convenient moment. Raidou-dono, since there’s the chance, use this opportunity to watch and learn.” (Rembrandt) “Hah?! Well, it is certainly true that a real revolution and an independence will serve as incredible teaching material, but...” (Makoto) What if I am asked for a report after all this is over?!

If I am dragged into it, it wouldn't be the time for learning!

"In the end, there's no better learning experience than mixing in the actual place of the action. Not by standing at the front and acting, but by being one step back and watching. It might become an incredible learning material." (Rembrandt) Uh.

Saying 'incredible learning material' without thinking, might have been bad.

Even if I am like this right now, compared to my past self, I don't immediately say things without thinking that much.

I am aware that my verbal slips have decreased.

"By the way, Raidou-dono, why do you think a mere merchant like me, who is planning something so outrageous like making the remote region of Tsige independent, going through such lengths to even tell you this?" (Rembrandt) "That's probably because Rembrandt-san knows about this town the most and it is the result of you gathering information of the outside as well. Also, maybe because you have identified a big incident like that of a revolution beforehand." (Makoto) He said he would take advantage of the revolution after all.

How to say it, he does look like he has more confidence than before, and this is not overconfidence, but I feel it has something to do with me being in favor of it.

Of course, I won't be saying it out loud though.

"That's part of it. Putting more to it, your previous approval has given me quite a lot of confidence. But the direct impetus for this thought of independence was my contact with a certain person, and this was the result of learning that person's nature." (Rembrandt) "Contact with a certain person, is it. Who's that?" (Makoto)

There's no doubt that the ones who would benefit the most from the trouble of humans would be the demon race.

But this time, there's no way it is the demons.

Rembrandt-san has a pretty good amount of people that sympathize with him, like: Zef and his son. But Morris-san said that there's not much interference from the demon race.

The demons are being careful of me, and even if they did it, the most they would do would be to bring out money or lightly stir up someone.

Not only Senpai and Tomoki, every direction of Limia and Gritonia; I don't think there's anyone there who would be able to become the reason for why Rembrandt-san would wish for independence.

His back is probably filled with people that are against him, so those kind of people would be the very definition of people who would want to crush the revolution.

Since Lorel's territory is adjacent to Aion, they are not directly fighting with the demon race.

...But they are a country that has deep religious believe in the Water Spirits that are subordinates of the Goddess.

In other words, it is impossible to ask the temple to accept the revolution in the first place since it is viewed as evil.

As I thought, the highest possibility is an Aion noble.

Since it would lead to the decline in national power, the chances are low, but the most possible one would be an Aion noble or someone influential.

A person that approves of the revolution, and a noble that is in a standing of influence.

Someone like that cooperating with Rembrandt-san sounds plausible.

"Is it a noble from a big household in this country?" (Makoto)

"Fufu. Thinking about it reasonably, it is one of the possibilities that you can arrive at." (Rembrandt) I missed!

Even though I had quite a bit of confidence in that one!

"I was wrong huh." (Makoto)

"For Raidou-dono who wants to learn about society, this can be

considered an interesting reality. Well then, let's have you meet with that person. But well...I don't think this is your first time meeting that person though." (Rembrandt) "...Eh?" (Makoto)

With the sign of Rembrandt-san, Morris-san who was at the door, turned the knob and invited someone into the room.

She looked at me, but without changing her expression, she made a deep bow.

Why is this person...

In my surprise, I couldn't find any proper words to speak.

Unable to open my mouth, my mind was simply in chaos.

"Raidou-dono, it's been long. To think that you would help out in Limia, I am truly grateful for that action of yours."

"Ah...yeah." (Makoto)

I somehow manage to gulp.

This person is the person that I had excluded just a moment ago.

Thinking about it normally, there's no way she would be here, and no way she would sympathise with Rembrandt-san.

Why?

Just, why?

"This might be the first time I see you so surprised." (Rembrandt)

Rembrandt-san laughs amused.

"...Sairitz-san." (Makoto)

"Yes. Lorel's empress, Saritz. It makes me happy to know that the merchant-dono who's the current talk of the time's, remembers my name." (Sairitz) The empress of the Spirit temple in Lorel Union.

Why is a person like that in a place where the conversation is about using the revolution to gain independence?

Moreover, it seems like she knows the situation.

After Sairitz-san, a number of people enter the room as well.

From within them, there's people I have seen in Tsige, and there's also people I see for the first time.

"Now then, since we have now gathered here, let's begin by laying bare our thoughts and positions so we can begin the talk. Don't worry, this is just to let first timers know. No need to proceed the talk in a smooth manner. First, we will talk about our opinions. I have prepared light meals and drinks, so let's proceed without tension." (Rembrandt) I-I take back what I said.

I already want to abandon my thoughts and return to Asora.

At this moment, I was not simply over my capacity, I was feeling something incredibly scary.

This is definitely not how you begin learning something!

Why is it that in this world, it always begins from the messed up parts?!

Chapter 229: Settling down, but jumping around

incredibly tense time passed that was incomparable from the usual gatherings of merchants.

It wasn't a discussion with a clear answer yet, so the conversations were varied, and...to put it simply, the more I heard, the more blank I was.

Right, I felt like the time there was even more tiring than any of the battles I have experienced.

Looking at the memo I desperately wrote in a practically absent-minded state, there was the information of everyone's conversation properly written in it.

"As expected...of the people that have made a name in Tsige. That was impressive."
(Makoto) Well, there was also Sairitz-san and a number of outsiders as well.

At the very least, I have written down their features and the contents of their self-introduction.

There were also a lot of people I met for the first time, so it is better if I get those things inside my head as soon as possible.

Even so...Aion's revolution and Tsige's independence huh.

I am impressed that so many things are happening one after the other.

Moreover, the events I have been involved with lately have been so big in scale.

"Well, it doesn't change the fact that it is something reckless, but I could understand that they do have a chance for success. For today, let's leave it at that. I am back~~." (Makoto)
"Waka! Welcome back!"

I return to the Kuzunoha company's first store inside Rembrandt-san's store.

It makes me happy to see that they are doing well as always.

I receive greetings from the four clerks that are stationed in the store.

Everyone called out 'Waka' in a loud voice, so I was received by the intense gazes of the customers, and after showing a smile to them, I head to the counter.

When I reach the back where the office is in, I could see the Forest Oni and the Gorgon working energetically.

The scale of the store is small, but that doesn't mean the office is small as well.

And in reality, the two of them look busy.

"Waka-sama, welcome back!"

“I am back. You don’t have to mind me. Continue with your work.” (Makoto) Seeing me, they stopped their work to greet me, but I didn’t want to get in their way, so I had them return to their work.

Even so, when I arrived at the seat I don’t use that much, the Gorgon brought me a drink.

In the end, just by being here, I am having them mind me.

I want to make it clear there’s no need to, but I just can’t.

“Thanks.” (Makoto)

“No need to. We were also thinking about drinking tea after all.”

“Anyways, this place really is prospering. I have received reports that since the time Tsige made a sudden growth, the number of customers and the sales have increased continuously, but from the view of you guys who are in the actual place, what do you think?” (Makoto) “Well, obviously, aside from being able to report the numbers, it is also a job that’s worth doing everyday. Other than the customers buying in the store, there’s also a lot who make appointments and orders, so we are in a situation where we have to request for the inventory to be expanded and an increase in craftsmen.”

Inventory number and increase in craftsmen huh.

It is certainly true that it is a matter that has been brought a number of times.

No matter how many times I respond to it, there would always be another request for it, so lately, I have been putting it on hold to check the situation.

It is been a long while since I walked around Tsige, and my thoughts have changed a bit.

It is not that Kuzunoha Company is the only one that has been getting an increase in sales and profiting, the whole town is growing at an unbelievable pace.

Every time I visit, the town changes –no exaggeration. The current Tsige is overflowing in liveliness.

Also...she said: ‘it is a job worth doing everyday’ huh.

From what I see in her expression, those are not words said sarcastically or with malice.

This makes me more happy than being told that they are busy.

“...Is it enough to just increase the amount of craftsmen? Is the work inside the store okay with your current numbers?” (Makoto) “In the days where there’s a lot more customers than normal, we are also helping out in the store, so there’s not that much need to increase the personnel for now, but...could it be...”

“Yeah, I will think about it.” (Makoto)

“Thank you very much!”

At the store in Rotsgard, there's customers frequenting it, but I have been leaving Tsige to the others.

I have to reflect on that.

"I want to see how much I should be increasing it though. I also want to hear about the present condition and do some catching up, so...can you have someone gather the report documents and have that person come to my place after dinner?" (Makoto) "U-Understood!"

I have consulted with Shiki and used Rotsgard's daily reports as a reference, so it is probably best if I don't decide on the details at this moment.

Thinking about how I have to participate in the meetings that Rembrandt-san organizes, I think it is a good time to increase the sales by one step higher.

Even though we are not a restaurant, we are receiving ordinary people and adventurers night and day which is actually rare for a store.

Kuzunoha Company has been able to advance this far while maintaining that kind of position until now.

Even if we have the advantage of receiving customers that come to the Rembrandt company, this is still pretty impressive.

"Now then, please continue working hard. I just dropped in for a bit, so I will be returning now. I am counting on you regarding the report." (Makoto) "Have a good day!"

From what I saw in my short glimpse, there was no despising atmosphere inside the store just because the clerks were demi-humans.

But Rembrandt-san has advised me that it is already time for me to think about employing humans.

I thought about doing that in case any distress occurred, but if we were to employ humans in Tsige...

If it is simply for some sort of countermeasure, I can have Rembrandt-san transfer someone from his place.

If it is fine as long as it is a human, I can just have that person stand like a scarecrow without doing anything. Honestly speaking, that would be ideal.

There's no need for the human to be capable, and there's no need for that person to become capable either.

If we go by the usual policy, we can have people from Asora trained to a reasonable level and station them in the stores, so I don't think there's the need of hiring humans from zero and raise them.

There's nothing similar to an employment agency in this world, so it makes it difficult in that part.

The temporary employment of students that we are doing in Rotsgard –in other words, part-time job– seems to be viewed as something pretty strange.

Their side is currently in the middle of reconstruction, and they are quite tolerant in those kind of things, so it is great that there wasn't as much opposition as I thought.

Because I used a part of the students that I actually know and am teaching, introducing them to the part-time job went smoothly.

...

As I thought. When I think of one thing, my thoughts begin to disperse here and there, and it steadily becomes more complicated in my head.

I have been told to think about it in a more simple manner, and this is a bad habit of mine.

For now, I have to sort out the information that I was given, so let's return to Asora.



Finishing dinner, the four followers of mine had gathered in my room.

“Milliono Company and Eleor Company huh. It is certainly true that they are both companies that have been gaining momentum in Tsige. Both of them were part of the backbone of Tsige since before Kuzunoha Company was created, and I do remember them growing abruptly along with Tsige.” (Shiki) “Hmph, I see. It was my first time meeting them, but as expected, they are incredible people huh. Both representatives were pretty amicable, so they gave a good impression. Milliono company is a wholesale store of raw materials in the wasteland, and Eleor company specializes in selling land and buildings. It is great that they are not competing in the same trade as us. I feel like we can have a genuine friendly relationship.” (Makoto) In terms of raw materials, Tomoe and Mio are not unrelated.

And in truth, the representative-san of Milliono company had given his thanks to Tomoe, Mio, and I, regarding the circulation of raw materials in the wasteland.

But Milliono company buys from the places that buy raw materials, so there's probably no direct connection with us.

My impression was that he is a person with integrity.

Regarding Eleor company, if I remember correctly, the lands for stores are provided with the referral of the Merchant Guild.

As expected of Shiki.

He knows about both companies.

“Hm...Eleor company. If I remember correctly...” (Tomoe)

Tomoe seems to be searching in her memories.

Ah, now that I think about it, I had Tomoe herself buy the land.

“Is it a company you know?” (Makoto)

“...Ah, yes. The landowner I bought the land from before and was being intimate with someone, was most likely from a company with that name.” (Tomoe) “The landowner being intimate with someone, you say. That has nothing to do with us.” (Makoto) “...Right. Well, even if they have land, no real problem has occurred, and there has been no time where we have had to aid them in anything.” (Tomoe) “Is that all?” (Makoto)

I feel like there’s more to it, so I try asking.

“Probably. Right now I can only remember this much.” (Tomoe)

But the answer was a vague denial.

“I was advised to buy a land from Eleor company. The land that we possess is adjacent to the land I was recommended. He said that: ‘Since your company is doing so well, you will be making a store in a near future, so check the place out as reference’.” (Makoto) He is truly good in his trade.

It is true that renting a room from Rembrandt-san all the time will just cause him trouble, and I already have land for that purpose anyways.

If the land was in a distanced place from ours, I would have refused immediately, but if it is adjacent to the land we already own, we would be able to increase the scale of our store.

Maybe he thought I didn’t make a store yet because I probably would be buying the land in the surroundings as well?

It is hard to believe that he coincidentally had a free plot of land right beside ours.

In the past, there was a store in that place, and since the time the owner was gone, the land there has been empty, which is strange.

I feel like he is aiming at my wallet.

I give Tomoe the information of the plot of land I received from the representative.

Buying land in Tsige is expensive.

I understand if it were simply expensive, but I don’t have a standard to know just how expensive it is considered.

I just know of it vaguely.

I only know about concepts like: the spots close to the stations are expensive, and in the rural areas, it is cheap. That kind of perception.

That's why I have Tomoe and Shiki check it out first and hear their opinions before deciding.

Because, leaving aside if a percent of what has transpired today will be actually implemented, Eleor company is thinking about expanding the outer walls of the town; in other words, he is thinking about increasing the land of Tsige.

And that's why he needs the necessary amount of money to buy the land that will be increasing.

Maybe he was actually the one who provided for the cost of this movement—or so to say, bribe—and also took part in the cost for the construction work of the outer wall.

In that case, there's plenty chance that the land I am being presented with, is priced incredible high.

"This is..." (Shiki)

"Fumu." (Tomoe)

The two that had checked the paper, widened their eyes for a moment.

Surprised?

In that case...it is pretty expensive, or on the contrary, pretty cheap?

"Compared to Rotsgard and thinking about the area, I feel like the price is strangely high but, what do you two think?" (Makoto) I know the price of one town cannot be compared with another.

But with that same price, I would be able to buy a plot of land in Rotsgard ten times the size.

It seems like Tsige has a higher price in land compared to other towns, but honestly, I wonder if the difference is really this high.

Even though the land I possess has practically the same size, it is five times more expensive than the time when we bought it.

I suspect I am being robbed here.

No matter if the first impressions were good, there's no way I would be able to trust everything the merchants say.

"This is abnormal." (Shiki)

"Umu. Looking at this, the other party isn't even doing a trade anymore." (Tomoe) Eh?

Tomoe and Shiki returned an unexpected response.

"You mean, the price is cheap?" (Makoto)

“Yeah. To the point that it is hard to believe that this estimation was provided by the Eleor company to us.” (Tomoe) “Tsige is a town that is growing at a fast pace. It may depend on the time when Eleor company bought the land, but with this price, their side isn’t gaining any profit from it. A plot of land requires managing and tax expenses as well after all.” (Shiki) “Well then...it is true that I thought it is time to have a store, so we should consider it a benefit for us?” (Makoto) Should we buy it?

I did use a bit of money for matters regarding Kaleneon, but currently, we have more than enough.

“...But this is... Tomoe-dono.” (Shiki)

“Hmm. It is true that this is slightly strange-ja na. Waka, let’s not decide immediately and have a business discussion with the other party first. As soon as possible, in a day when Shiki or I are available. There’s something I want to confirm.” (Tomoe) “...Understood.” (Makoto)

“Waka-sama, I have seen the place called Milliono company a good numbers of times in the requests of the Adventurer Guild. Obtaining rare raw materials, requests regarding the gathering of a fixed amount of raw materials; those kind of requests. This is a guess from the amount of requests and their rewards, but it seemed like they were quite the influential company.” (Mio) “If Mio remembers them, they most likely have placed quite a good amount of requests. The representative did send his thanks to Tomoe and Mio. He said that it was thanks to you two that the circulation of raw materials in the wasteland had increased.” (Makoto) Eleor company’s representative and the Millionor company’s representative are both good with their words.

They go for the praises.

It is certainly true that Tomoe and Mio have contributed with the raw materials in the wasteland, but the ones that are actually bringing the materials back are people like Toa and the others.

And yet, he said that it was thanks to those two.

Praising is free huh.

“I haven’t been looking after the adventurers lately, but...if Tamaki is going to be giving her undivided attention to Asora, we will gain some spare time as well so, would you want me to show my face there again?” (Mio) Mio doesn’t look like she is kidding.

It seems like the praise actually worked.

“Spare time will be something we won’t have for a while though. We can’t just have her suddenly taking care of everything regarding Asora after all.” (Tomoe) Tomoe also seems to be thinking positively about taking care of the adventurers.

You too?

Well, I was also happy hearing Tomoe and Mio being praised.

The shrine maiden that has recently become my follower, Tamaki. If she were to learn her job fast, the one who will be having it easier would be Shiki, but it would also reduce a part of the burden in Tomoe and Mio, so the two will probably be looking after the adventurers in Tsige.

“In order for you two to have that spare time, I will do my best.” (Tamaki) And Tamaki responded to our gazes with a smile.

“Right. It seems like there’s no problems with the gates that connect the Shinto shrine with the town but, how many people will you need to manage the place from now on? That place is pretty big, and there’s no people who know about Shinto shrines so...” (Makoto) “Being able to come and go from this town to the Shinto shrine is the very definition of comfortable. We plan on beginning the discussion about the construction work with the people living in the town at the sea. Regarding the people that will be helping in the work at the Shinto shrine...” (Tamaki) The report of Tamaki had begun.

I nod as I listen.

To begin with, even if there’s no Gods in this space, the Shinto shrine is a place that reveres Gods, so instead of workers, she wants capable people that will formally serve as Shinto priests.

I can understand.

I accept this.

Next, regarding the knowledge of Shinto shrines, it seems like she wants to use a part of the books with my memories that Tomoe has put together.

Well, this is also acceptable.

When she was guided to the book storage, she was pretty surprised. Tamaki, who has a hard to read expression, had a rare easy to read face, one that I could clearly see her interest as she spoke with Tomoe.

To obtain knowledge of my world, books are the fastest method, and just in case, Tomoe and I will be confirming the contents of the books first, so there shouldn’t be any problems occurring.

Recently in Asora, there have been people that wanted to be cooks, and lately, specialized jobs that didn’t exist before in the variety of races had begun appearing in Asora.

It is kind of heartwarming.

“Thanks to Makoto-sama holding the cherry blossom viewing party, the impression they

have is quite good, and a religion isn't something to be forced on someone anyways.”
(Tamaki) It seems like there was no negative feelings regarding the sudden appearance of temples.

I don't really plan on educating them in it.

It is great that no problems occurred.

Beginning with Shiki, she will also be relieving the work of Tomoe and Mio. We will watch the ability of Tamaki, but it seems like she plans on learning at once.

Learning how to do your job as fast as possible is great.

Of course, we will watch and see how much work she can do at the same time.

If we pile too much on her, it is natural that it would end in failure.

I have experienced it many times already.

“That's what I have to say. Also, after I grow able to properly do my job, I can help with the company by assisting in the work of Shiki-san—” (Tamaki) “There's no need for that. Shiki is doing plenty good after all. Tamaki will be centered in the matters of Asora. I want you to exchange opinions between the many races no matter if land or sea.” (Makoto) Currently, in terms of my followers, I have Tomoe and Shiki checking the first town; for the town that's being made at the seashore, I have mainly Mio and Shiki.

I will have Tamaki look after both of them and reduce the weight of Shiki.

“Understood. I got ahead of myself there. Sorry.” (Tamaki)

“No, I am happy to receive your opinion. Please continue voicing it out. And so, about the matter I told you before...Shiki. I am thinking about increasing the daily inventory of Tsige's store. Looking at the liveliness of the current Tsige, I don't think the quantity itself is the problem, but...how much do you think is best?” (Makoto) Shifting my gaze from Tamaki to Shiki, I change the topic.

But then, before Shiki could speak, someone knocked the door.

“Pardon the intrusion.”

Admitting the entrance of the person, a young Eldwa that was visibly nervous entered the room as he speaks with a trembling voice.

...He is walking by moving both his left arm and left leg at the same time and vice versa.

I haven't seen this kind of walking since my time in the primary school's parade practice.

This might be the first time I see someone do this out of nervousness.

“Thanks for the hard work. I have a few things I want to ask you. Please stay here for a bit.” (Tomoe) “Y-Yes!!”

Tomoe received the report documents and speaks to him.

I have already told everyone that one of the employees in the Tsige store would be coming here, so there's no problem.

"...Don't get so worked up. If you want to, how about moistening your throat with some Sake? It will make it easier to speak." (Tomoe) "I am fine!!"

But the Eldwa doesn't seem to be fine at all.

When I checked on Tomoe and the others, I could see that everyone was thinking the same.

Was it a bad idea to tell them to bring an employee?

Did they push the job around and turned it into some sort of punishment game to decide who would come?

It seems like Beren-san shows up pretty often in the store, so maybe it would have been better if I had him nominate someone to do it.

However...is this really something to be so nervous about?

It seems like Tomoe felt doubts about being able to hear anything from him at this rate, so she chose one of the drinks that have a bit of alcohol in it.

A brilliant emerald green liquid was poured by Tomoe, and the Eldwa received it with both of his trembling arms, and drank it all at once.

By the standards of dwarfs, it is weak alcohol that has a scent at most, so even if he drinks it all at once, he won't drop down. It wasn't enough to calm him completely, but he was still able to relax a bit, or at least it looks that way.

"Now then...I will be e-e-e-explaining the contents of the d-d-d-documents."

No good.

Doesn't seem like it will work.

"No, wait. The documents are truly well made. We will be the ones asking, so you can just answer." (Tomoe) ...Tomoe sends a lifesaver.

Oh, I can learn from that.

"It is true that it is well made. This was probably written by the Gorgon Yumemi. She does her office work well after all." (Shiki) "Just as you say, Shiki-sama!"

Gorgon.

Yeah, there was indeed one in the office.

Yumemi.

I was able to remember her in detail now that I heard her name.

She is the third girl that went to Tsige.

She seemed to be more lively now, but...she does resemble the Gorgon in my memories.

Women can change in any way by changing their make-up, clothes, and bearing.

I check the report documents that were passed to me.

By the way, I was the last one checking it.

Heh~, these documents are written in beautiful handwriting and is easy to read.

I can understand why they praise it.

There's a lot of number comparisons, so I can understand the current situation and see the motive of this time's request.

...This...I should save it as a role model.

"Then, regarding the current clientele of the Kuzunoha Company..." (Tomoe) Tomoe begins the questioning, and at times, Shiki also asks. The Eldwa answers them.

By the time 15 minutes passed...

The Eldwa that had finished his task, showed fatigue he couldn't hide, and left the room.

He looked as if his very soul was exhausted.

After that, we settled on the specific numbers, and decided that the store would be going with those numbers the day after tomorrow.

With this, we can finally enter the main issue.

"Yeah, with this, I think the store in Tsige will progress. Fuh...well then, regarding the Aion kingdom's revolution and the move of Tsige..." (Makoto) "If Rembrandt says it will occur, there's no doubt that a revolution will occur in Aion." (Tomoe) "I agree." (Shiki)

"I think so as well." (Mio)

"..."

Aside from Tamaki, everyone else agreed with Tomoe.

Tamaki doesn't understand the situation and the circumstances, so it is natural that she would maintain silence.

"Then, what do you think of Tsige's independence? As long as we have Kuzunoha company there, there's no way we can stay unrelated after all." (Makoto) "As long as that man, Rembrandt, is the one trying to do it, it will be stormy, but I think things will just go its course." (Tomoe) Tomoe seems to be thinking the same as I.

Honestly, since Rembrandt-san is the one doing it, I think there's a pretty good chance of success.

"Until now, instead of being the Tsige of Aion kingdom, it was more like Tsige was the entrance of the wasteland anyways. If Aion is not of any help to the town, I think it is not strange at all that they are thinking about independence." (Mio) Mio pointed out Tsige's impression as a town.

But I think that's how it is recognized as.

Tsige may not be considered a base, but it is a town that is filled with the spirit of a frontier.

Since the time I arrived at Tsige, the connection the residents had with the Aion kingdom was already faint.

"If they can maintain their self-defense, there's only merits in independence. But..." (Shiki)
"What?" (Makoto)

"Regarding the self-defense of that town, as expected, the protection provided by being related to one of the major powers plays a big role. Even so, whether it is Rotsgard or Tsige, the towns that Waka-sama places a store in really become lively." (Shiki) ...

T-That's just a coincidence.

"...I think the revolution will be a good timing for independence. But Tsige is a town that produces fear. Aion Kingdom and Lorel Union; I don't think these two major powers, would tolerate the self-government of a small sized nation in their vicinities." (Tamaki) Tamaki speaks about the difficulty of independence based on the situation in their location and the economy.

In the first place, Aion kingdom wouldn't let go of the benefits so easily.

"It seems like the groundwork for that is already being done by Rembrandt-san and the influential people in the surroundings though." (Makoto) "Yeah, since the merchant called Rembrandt has skills that even Tomoe-san recognizes, he probably won't slip up in those points. That's why I think independence is possible, but when I think about how they could maintain it, there's not much good scenarios. The humans are in the middle of fighting the demon race, and having an inside fight at such a time is evidently not something good. Who knows if Limia kingdom and Gritonia empire will silently watch this." (Tamaki) "Yeah." (Makoto)

It is true that the demon race might utilize the confusion that the revolution in Aion and the declaration of independence of Tsige will cause.

If their opponent will show an opening on their own in the middle of a war, not doing anything would be a loss.

In that case, Tsige will be showered with criticism from every nation.

How would that work?

I feel like that would become quite the demerit.

“In the first place, even if it’s in secret, why is the Lorel Union assisting in the independence of Tsige? I don’t understand their reason for it. If things go wrong, wouldn’t it just end in changing affiliations from Aion kingdom to Lorel Union?” (Tamaki) “The reason Sairitz-san spoke of was that Tsige had helped them out quite a lot recently.” (Makoto) In the past, there was an incident with a purple cloud that was thought came from the wasteland, and it created heavy damage to Lorel.

This was solved with the contact of Lime and I also helped in it, or more like, I was the one who dealt with the cloud though. In public, it is known as the result of Hibiki-senpai’s help, somehow managing to stop it.

At that time, the Lorel Union had requested the help of Aion which in turn ended with the assistance of Tsige. Rembrandt-san was the one who directly worked in the countermeasures, and helped out a lot, or so she said.

That’s why this is their way of saying thanks.

Now that I think about it, I feel like the cooperation of Lorel in this holds more risks than benefits.

Anyways, Tamaki considered the case that Lorel was aiming for Tsige.

That’s possible, but...

“Even if it’s the order of the Lorel empress, I think it is an incredibly strange reason for a major power to act.” (Tamaki) “Tamaki, even though you haven’t gone to the outside once, you speak as if you know the ways of the world very well-ja na.” (Tomoe) “I have not received permission to go outside, but to compensate, I have properly read the records until now. Of course, I haven’t stepped into the specifics of this world, so if there’s any part I am wrong about, I would be happy if you point them out.” (Tamaki) “Hoh~, you are passionate in your studies-ja no.” (Tomoe)

“I want to be of help for Makoto-sama even if for a day faster.” (Tamaki) ...Strange sparks are flying again.

The two of them have a dangerous smile and that’s a bit scary.

But just by checking the report documents and records, she is able to speak this much. That’s impressive.

Right. Tamaki is speaking without knowing about Tsige, Aion, Lorel, and Rotsgard.

Keeping that in mind, I have to point out the parts where she has strange

misunderstandings.

“Okay okay. Tomoe and Tamaki, stop that. The detailed plan of the independence has not been disclosed in that meeting. I will try asking a few things and see. At the times when I want you guys to come with me, it would be great if you make enough spare time beforehand.” (Makoto) Counting the matter of how we are going to cooperate in this, this is a period where I still have to grasp more information.

Also...yeah.

Self-defense huh.

The present condition is that Aion is not providing any sort of fighting force for Tsige’s defenses.

That’s why I wasn’t that worried about this part.

I thought it wouldn’t change that much from the present condition so it should be okay.

But the name ‘Aion kingdom’ creates an intangible defense for Tsige that I didn’t take much into account.

A prosperous town in a major power, compared to a prosperous town that is being self-governed.

If an outside force wanted to meddle, the latter one would be the easier target.

Tsige provides raw materials that are indispensable for the outside, and it possesses the most in depth information of the wasteland, but that doesn’t serve as a deterrent.

Rather, it would be more natural for other influential forces to think about obtaining those benefits.

Instead of cooperating or allying, if possible, there’s no doubt that taking them in would be the option that brings the most benefit.

“Please ask us whenever you want.” (Tomoe)

The other three nod at the words of Tomoe.

Thanks.

I felt like straight words of gratitude were coming out of me, but because it felt embarrassing, I simply whispered in my mind.

The thoughts of Rembrandt-san, and the plans of Sairitz-san.

I wonder just how much those two are wishing for in this matter.

Thinking about those kind of things might serve as a lesson too.

The declaration of independence from Tsige. I am interested in how the Aion kingdom will

deal with it.

Also, the act of a town trying to gain independence from a major power; this is without doubt a dispute between humans.

The Goddess probably won't have her turn in this matter, and even if she wanted to, thinking about her situation, I doubt she can do anything.

We won't need to worry about Bug.

I have gone around the world a lot lately, but it will probably be on hold for a while.

Right, settle down and...

Hm?

Even if I settle down from these matters about independence and revolution...I still have my work as a teacher in Rotsgard and I can't just leave the store at that place either, and I also have to go to Kaleneon every now and then.

That means...I will be jumping around as always.

"At any rate, Waka, in the end, we weren't able to visit Lorel Union. So *conquering* the four major powers will have to be postponed until the next pleasure trip huh. That's a pity. But when the time comes, please let me accompany you." (Tomoe) "Wait! Wait Tomoe-san, what are you saying all of a sudden?! That's called skipping the line, you know?! Leaving aside the newcomer that's banned from going outside and the favoured Shiki, we should properly talk about this and let *me* go!" (Mio) ...I don't think I'm favoring him though.

Also, banned from going outside, she says. As if Tamaki were a kid.

Mio is throwing poison at me without any intentions.

"I don't mind talking about it, but the one who will be going is me-ja. I heard that Lorel is a place where the culture of Waka has been inherited and taken form. It is obvious that Waka and I should be the ones going around that kind of place!" (Tomoe) ...Ah.

Saying that they should have a talk, but then saying that 'I will be the one going'. Isn't that strange?

There's no conversation in that.

However, Tomoe is not backing off either.

I didn't know that she had such attachment to Lorel.

Well, it is certainly true that I have gone around a number of large countries, so I won't say I didn't feel like I was in a trip.

But calling it a pleasure trip, that hurts you know.

I was relatively serious in those visits, and I was also nervous!

“Okay then. Let’s have a through TALK!” (Mio)

“That’s what I wanted!” (Tomoe)

Just do whatever you want.

When these two talk, the chances that sparks fly to my direction are high, but I just don’t have the energy to stop them.

Shiki and Tamaki don’t seem to have any intentions of joining it either and are just watching.

Even if the number of followers increase, even if the chances of Tsige gaining independence increases, Asora is still the same as always.

Chapter 230: Renewal

TLN: There was an error last chapter. It wasn't half a month before the revolution starts –It was half a YEAR. I knew something was strange with those numbers, so I double checked. Fixed already. Apologies for the error

*

A noisy and packed busy time.

When one moves, the time really does go fast.

Of course in Tsige it is like this, but in Asora and also in the store in Rotsgard that are not directly related, are also moving busily.

Counting the movement of personnel, these two months have been a time of great reformation for Kuzunoha company.

“Waka, please show up at noon in the Tsige store. I will also be going around the expanded areas of Tsige, but when I finish, I will be heading there.” (Tomoe) “Understood. Mio and Shiki are okay, right?” (Makoto)

“Of course. Mio has already done the preparations, and Shiki seems to have a meeting with Morris, but he said he will be done by morning. However, Waka, it seems like these days have become more busy than the time when you were going around the various countries.” (Tomoe) Tomoe made an ill-natured smile.

I actually thought that things would calm down after finishing the visits, but it seems I was completely wrong.

She is probably poking at that.

“I won't say it was perfect, but I was somehow able to overcome it, so please don't bully me too much. I have been practically stuck with Rembrandt-san everyday with almost perfect attendance in the meetings for the preparation of the revolution. I have also worked as a teacher in Rotsgard without rest.” (Makoto) I received the lessons of Rembrandt-san regarding merchants and the actual state of the commerce, and also taught classes in Rotsgard with Jin and the others as well as the new juniors that were admitted in the class. I also heard the opinions of the

people in Asora as I adjust the stance of Kuzunoha company regarding the Aion revolution and the independence of Tsige.

Ah...just remembering it makes me wanna puke.

My determination of two months ago about doing all the things that I have decided to do, has all come onto me like a mountain.

The first month was the hardest, and when I was alone in my room, there were times when I laughed without any reason.

I had practically no time to sleep after all.

When I was unable to take it anymore and collapsed, one of my followers would find me and reactivate me.

...I will be...sleeping as much as I can tomorrow.

No matter what anyone tells me, I will sleep a good 3 hours!

“...I admire that you have decided not to run when you have decided on doing something, but for us who are watching this, it has also become worrying. Anyways, I had no intentions of bullying you at all. I really meant to be proud when I said: ‘as expected of our master’.” (Tomoe) “...Thanks.” (Makoto)

“Ah, right. In the afternoon greeting round, Shiki and I will be accompanying you as well. There have been a number of people who have been noisy, saying that we should go greet as well you see.” (Tomoe) “I know. I will be counting on you guys.” (Makoto)

“Who knows. Seeing Waka lately, I don’t think there’s much need for us though. Well then, see you later.” (Tomoe) “Yeah. Give my regards to the representative of Eleor company.” (Makoto) With summer coming closer, Tsige had changed the location of their outer wall that hadn’t been changed for a long time, and it has been rebuilt.

Slightly into the side of the wasteland, and more into the side of Aion.

Thanks to that, new land has become available in the town and the price of the land has decreased slightly as a whole.

‘The price will soon increase again, so the decrease in price is only

temporary', is what the Eleor representative said as he spend freely in the lands with a smile in his face.

With the plans of constructions and the actual execution, the money is moving at a terrifying speed. Of course, he is shouldering quite the burden in the expenses, and yet, he had a truly good smile.

In other words, he knows that he will be profiting more.

How fearsome is the real estate industry.

Regarding the land that the Eleor company asked if I would be buying, we had a business discussion again accompanied by Tomoe, and in the end, we bought it.

With that price, 'they are not even doing a trade'. But it doesn't match the ratio of the money that's moving in a daily basis.

Even if the materials that the adventurers obtain from the wasteland have a ridiculous price as well, they are literally risking their life to obtain them.

Thinking in that way, I do feel like it is slightly unreasonable.

After buying the land and ending the business discussion, Tomoe was occasionally involved with the Eleor company.

As I see her off, I thought of this.

"Well, even if I think it is unreasonable...I have already bought the land from him, and we are normally pretty friendly with each other. The land that's inside the outer walls is on high demand and there's also the price for security counted in it, and in the first place, there are a lot of people who would wish to buy the land in Tsige. Just because there's big transactions done inside the town doesn't mean that your life will always be safe and stable inside it after all." (Makoto) Since Eleor company has achieved safety and stability, there must be something that's balancing it.

How far they can go depends on the sense of the merchant himself. For me, the representative of Eleor company looks like he is in a dangerous position where he would fall at any moment.

I obviously don't possess such sharp senses like him.

As I received the teachings of Rembrandt-san, I was able to clearly tell this.

That's why I have been able to continue business while maintaining a safe line.

And I have now build a store in the land I had previously bought. I finally got the resolve to make my own store in Tsige.

After hearing the requests for an increase in inventory and personnel, I decided to take this chance to implement it, and in the end, the store we built turned out pretty big.

And so, today is the opening day of the store.

Since the morning –no, since the previous night, the employees have been moving busily.

There's visible fatigue as expected, but seeing that their faces were mostly cheerful was a saving for me.

Tomoe, Mio, and Shiki have been working in Tsige the whole day.

Akua and Eris were brought from Rotsgard as temporary helpers, and Lime has also been brought here, so it is truly an event where the Kuzunoha company has gathered.

However...

“In this time when Aion might make a move, Kuzunoha company will be opening a big store in Tsige, huh.” (Makoto) There's not really any hidden meaning behind the opening and date of it.

There's none, but it is a timing that can be taken as some sort of declaration.

I don't have any intentions of changing what I will be doing, so worrying about it is pointless. Be that as it may, I understand that this is bad timing.

In reality, this opening day might have been controlled by Rembrandt-san and the others, but if I begin thinking about that, there would be no

end.

knock knock

Hm?

“Come in.” (Makoto)

I respond to the knock.

“Waka.”

“Eris huh. What’s wrong?” (Makoto)

“To celebrate our opening, merchants and adventurers are popping all over.” (Eris) “...I see.” (Makoto)

Now that I think about it, I heard from Rembrandt-san that before the opening begins, there will be a celebration where a small amount of people will come for greetings.

The people that want to have a relationship of big trades would normally come after the opening for their greetings, and there will be times when they would inquire for it, but it seems like it is a tradition to have adventurers and acquainted merchants visit you before the store opens.

The adventurers mostly wait for when the opening ends to enter as customers, so the merchants are normally the ones who would come for the greetings.

Even so, they are arriving this fast?

There’s still quite a lot of time before the opening.

“Understood. I will be going soon. Are there a lot of merchants as expected?” (Makoto) “For now, there’s more adventurers. They probably intend to line up for the store opening after they are done with their congratulations.” (Eris) “Ah, I see.” (Makoto)

“The majority are thinking about introducing themselves to the tops of Kuzunoha company who are unreachable in normal circumstances. By the way, there’s an incredible line waiting for the opening, and we have been rearranging it many times. The street on the front is already incredibly

filled. This is something that we wouldn't be able to see in Rotsgard..... And I don't want to see it there anyways." (Eris) "So the line is growing well. Understood. Please tell the people who are organizing the line to not cause any trouble for others. I have already notified the town about it so it should be fine, but the lined up customers would probably get impatient and things can happen." (Makoto) "Don't worry." (Eris)

With her eyes glittering for a moment, Eris shows me a thumbs up.

...When she is not together with Akua, I feel like her malice is way too strong, but even if Eris is like this, she is a girl that has been managing well with the customers.

Her sales are pretty high too.

I leave the office at the fourth floor together with Eris and head to the first floor.

The new Kuzunoha company has an extravagant structure of one basement and four floors.

Tsige has begun having buildings here and there with three floors, but four floors is pretty rare.

Thanks to that, the building alone stands out, which is a thankful extra.

Now then, about the people that have come to celebrate the opening...

Wow.

"Oi oi, Eris. Isn't this an incredible number?" (Makoto)

"Since you said: 'Oi' twice, it must be important." (Eris)

"...There's even people that seem to have business cards." (Makoto)

"Uwaa~. You ignored me. I am against killing jokes." (Eris)

For now, I ignore Eris and once again look at the people that are gathered at the main entrance.

'Popping out' really does describe this.

Some of them even have business cards which I once used for fun with Rembrandt-san and had now propagated.

What the people are holding in their hands is probably presents for the celebration, but I have to question their bragging.

It seems like business cards have become established enough that even adventurers carry them.

This is really a scene that can't be seen at Rotsgard. It feels fresh.

I was thinking about surprising the merchants by giving them business cards, but it probably won't be much of a surprise now.

The amount of influence Rembrandt-san has is amazing.

"Well, I gotta go. They went through the trouble of coming here after all." (Makoto) "Waka is the only one here, so I think it will become something dreadful, you know. What should we do? Should we place a 10 second rule or something?" (Eris) "What's that? Are you talking about placing a limit of 10 seconds per person?" (Makoto) "That's right. Leaving aside the amount of seconds, I will come in at a random moment and say: 'Thank you very much~~!' and push their back so the next one can go." (Eris) "...Is this some sort of handshake event? But well, I am counting on you. Can you bring two or three more in order to cope with it?" (Makoto) "Leave it to me~. I will properly gather up things like business cards and presents to make them identifiable, so I am counting on you to confirm them later. Now then..." (Eris) With a mysterious salutation, Eris trotted inside the store and left my sight.

Leaving aside her speech and conduct, it is true that she is an useful and dependable girl.

Lately, I have been thinking that way more frequently.

Now then, let's begin working as the representative of Kuzunoha company!

Opening the main entrance, my long day had begun.



-Basement.

Articles managed: mainly equipment.

Sale of equipment tailored to the requester, equipment for normal customers, repairs, and a counter for advice.

Crowded.

-First floor.

Articles managed: Mainly food, as well as food and drinks supervised by Mio.

Crowded.

-Second floor.

Articles managed: Mainly medicine. There's also consultations for compounding.

Crowded.

-Third floor.

Articles managed: Daily necessities, as well as miscellaneous goods. Ceramics made in Asora; industrial arts quality.

Crowded.

Well, it is the opening day, so it is within expectations.

It also means this is the best situation estimated.

But...

-Fourth floor.

Office.

Crowded.

What is going on?!

We safely did the opening, and customers flowed into the store, and after a bit of time, I confirmed that nothing happened and the business was operating without any problems, so together with Tomoe and Shiki, I went around greeting a part of the frequent customers.

That's what I planned on doing.

I had notified the related people beforehand that I would be greeting them, and opened the store in the meantime.

Even so, after finishing the greetings slightly hurried, I returned to the store and it was like this.

The office at the fourth floor was also filled with people.

Regarding the people that had come to celebrate in advance, I had already met with all of them before the opening day, and they said that they wouldn't be able to come in the appointed day, so they left their presents and I properly handled it, and yet!

“Ah!”

With one shout made from someone, the gazes concentrated in me.

It was an action that made me understand without doubt that these people had gathered with me as their objective.

“Most of them are probably people that felt danger from the prosperity of our store. Their decision of acting immediately can be considered good, but their insight for evaluating us lowly can't be praised. Now then...”
(Tomoe) Tomoe muttered in a low voice.

“There's also merchants that are not from Tsige. There's probably people that want to make connections for transactions. Even if that's not the case, this many people have come to our store, so it is natural for a merchant to want to greet the representative of such a company.” (Shiki)
Shiki also spoke in a low voice.

Whatever the case, Rembrandt-san will also be coming here, you know.
Geez!

“Sorry for the wait. I am the representative of this company, Raidou. I am truly grateful for your visit in this opening day. We will be inquiring your business shortly, so please wait for a bit.” (Makoto) Making a smile that I have already grown able to make by reflex, I face everyone with a greeting.

After that, since this is not something that can be dealt with with plain

fighting spirit, I had Tomoe and Shiki help out as well, and we went around speaking with everyone.

Mio is doing her best working at the first floor, so she shouldn't be able to move from there. Even so, she still helped out by bringing simple dishes and drinks for the people that were waiting.

Mio had prepared Japanese-styled food that was not normally seen in Tsige.

When she told them: 'This is the food that's being served at the food store below', they looked interested, and most of the customers had given it a try.

She helped filling the time for the waiting people, which was a grateful help.

If the time wasn't enough, I was thinking about having the remaining people leave, but in the end, there was no need to. We were able to finish dealing with the people that came to greet or have business discussions.

But well, regarding the business discussions, we told them that today we are not receiving any appointments, so we didn't enter any detailed talks.

The workload has increased, including the appointments of the areas each person is in charge of, but if, on top of that, we went into the details of business discussions at this moment, it would definitely end in failure, so there's no helping that.

I don't have the genius level business ability that people like Rembrandt-san and a number of merchants in this town have.

I also don't have the many years of experience that can fill this gap in talent.

It is also currently impossible for me to understand the advantages and disadvantages of a negotiation in a short amount of time.

"I-I am tired. It was unexpected work..." (Makoto)

"Even so, we have finished everything before Rembrandt came. Good job." (Tomoe) "There were also some negotiations with good prospects, so

it wasn't wasted time. Good work." (Shiki) Warm gazes were directed at me.

"Now there's only Rembrandt-san left and today's plans are over."
(Makoto) "Yes. After that, please rest at ease. We will arrange the documents of the sales today that have to be checked." (Shiki) "I will do so." (Makoto)

Today, I don't care about what move Aion makes.

If they make a big move tonight, I will do my hardest to vent my anger on them.

"Anyways, there can be this many congratulatory presents huh. We had them all sent to Asora, so there wasn't any problem with space to place them, but if we didn't have any way to deal with it, it could even affect the business." (Makoto) "That just proves how much attention Kuzunoha company is gathering." (Tomoe) While nodding at the response of Tomoe, I recall the congratulatory presents.

I accepted all presents aside from slaves and living things.

Later, I will have to give them a fitting present in return.

Even when the sun had set, the influx of people had not waned, but calm had already returned slightly in the office.

...At this rate, I think the situation in Mio's place is terrifying.

She herself said that she didn't have any intentions of coming here every day, but...I hope the opening doesn't turn into her first and last time she comes here.

"Well well, this is scary huh. To think that it would get this lively. There's no free space from top to bottom."

"Rembrandt-san." (Makoto)

"I am sorry that my greetings came so late, Raidou-dono. Congratulations in the opening of your store." (Rembrandt) "Thanks. You are right in time, so please don't mind it. From my part as well, I am sorry that I couldn't come welcome you." (Makoto) "Lime-kun received me.

There's no need to worry about it. I heard that you politely dealt with the merchants that jumped here. That must have been tiring, right?"

(Rembrandt) Now that I see, Lime was behind Rembrandt-san.

He bowed and soon returned downstairs.

Good work.

"I still have ways to go. I should have welcomed the appointed guests with slightly more time. I did say 'I was tired' out of reflex, but I am not really that tired." (Makoto) "Fufufu. Well, even if you are still young, there's no need to try doing everything perfectly. Those kind of people don't last long. It is best to understand your own limits. But well, as long as you have the opinions of your dependable close-aides, there's nothing to worry about. In your case, that is." (Rembrandt) "I am truly saved by them." (Makoto)

How much I should do, and how much I should think of it huh.

Getting a sense of balance in those kind of things is truly difficult.

It seems like the body learns how to gauge that as you gain experience, but in the eyes of Rembrandt-san, I probably looked like I was trying way too hard.

There's also the fact that this is the first day of our opening, but maybe I moved a bit too much without thinking of my own appearance.

If that's the case, I have to reflect.

"When you rented a place in my store, you began working there without any hesitation. Raidou-dono, you probably weren't self-aware, but...looking at your face today, you are actually feeling elated. The sensation that you have actually opened a store." (Rembrandt) "Yes. In order to do my best in Tsige, I will devote myself." (Makoto) "You are already devoted enough. I am looking forward to the time when you become big enough to cover Tsige completely." (Rembrandt) "Don't exaggerate." (Makoto)

"I can't go losing. It's clear that Kuzunoha company will attract even more customers as a famous sightseeing place as well, and in truth, it will turn out that way." (Rembrandt) "I feel like Rembrandt company is

already like that though.” (Makoto) “I am speaking of the time when Rembrandt company becomes the second figurehead of Tsige. I can’t fall too far behind when that happens.” (Rembrandt) “No way.” (Makoto)

A wry smile surfaced in my face.

Seeing this, the gently expression of Rembrandt-san turned into a serious one and he speaks.

“...Regarding the movements of that Kuzunoha company, the reports that have been sent from Tsige to Aion kingdom have not been good. This is something we are letting go intentionally, but from what I can interpret, the grand opening of Kuzunoha company will most likely make Aion kingdom view Kuzunoha company as a big factor of unrest for them.” (Rembrandt) “...Yes.” (Makoto)

“It can be considered one of the many triggers, but in this late in the game, it won’t be able to change the big wave that’s going to occur in this country. Moreover, I will not let Kuzunoha company be the target. Their opponent is the town of Tsige itself. Even so, I am sorry.” (Rembrandt) “No. I will say this straight. If they aren’t going to be making a big move today, just at this moment, I don’t feel like caring about the moves of Aion.” (Makoto) I am tired to the point of not having any surplus, so my current real feelings are like this.

No matter how Rembrandt-san utilizes the opening of our store, I will just stay as his ally.

I don’t really mind.

“...Hahaha, I see. Then let’s not make this long. This is a present from me to congratulate your opening. Check it out later.” (Rembrandt) Rembrandt-san stood up from his seat and was about to leave.

What was given to me was a white rolled up paper.

Ah, wait.

If I remember correctly, Rembrandt-san was guided by Lime and he came from the stairs, right?

Then let's introduce him to 'that'.

Since what he gave me is obviously something that will surprise me, I will also give him a surprise here.

"Please wait. If you are going to be leaving, go ahead and do so from here." (Makoto) Saying that, I stop him and guide him through the corridor.

The place we arrived at was a certain door at the end of the corridor.

"A dead end -no, a room?" (Rembrandt)

"Go ahead." (Makoto)

Guiding him, I touch the door.

Without any sound, the door slides open from both sides.

Rembrandt-san enters together with me as prompted, and within that small room, I touch the wall.

The door closes.

That's right. This is a modern era device I thought of when the structure of the building was decided to have one basement and four floors.

A convenient tool of civilization, Elevator-sama.

By the way, the power source is the magic power of the people boarding it.

In this case, me.

"Uo?!!" (Rembrandt)

"It is okay. It is simply going down. There's no sensation of falling down, right?" (Makoto) "U-umu. Rather than falling, it is more like we are slowly descending. What a mysterious sensation." (Rembrandt) "With this, we can move up and down. We still haven't decided if we will be making the scale big enough to have the customers utilize it as well, but for now, I have made it for employee use." (Makoto) We arrive at the first floor.

As expected, this is a lot easier than using the stairs.

“...Well well, there’s really people in Kuzunoha company that think of some incredible stuff. Truly incredible.” (Rembrandt) “Ahaha, did it surprise you?” (Makoto)

“The views are probably going to be divided in: one, an extravagant waste of magic power; and two, a step into magic for a more comfortable living. But...I am part of the people that think new techniques and products are born from curiosity and trial and error. I have been thoroughly surprised, but more than that, I was moved, and of course, I highly value it.” (Rembrandt) “...I didn’t expect you to say that much.” (Makoto)

“Raidou-dono, I will be counting on you for the years to come.” (Rembrandt) “Same here.” (Makoto)

Rembrandt-san boards the carriage that was waiting for him and leaves.

Is he the type of person that’s weak for new inventions?

I haven’t seen that side of him before, but in history, millionaires become patrons of things like inventions and arts, so it isn’t something that strange.

Right now, the elevator has problems with the magic power control, size, and the expenditure of magic power, so it is still not possible to have customers use it. Let’s try giving directions in order to make it possible for implementation.

Probably, no matter what form it takes, it will probably need an elevator girl –or more like, an elevator dwarf or an elevator orc though.

Should I increase the number of people working for the elevator?

Hm...

“Waka, looks like Rembrandt has left.” (Tomoe)

“Good work on seeing him off.” (Shiki)

“Ah, Tomoe and Shiki.” (Makoto)

“And so, Waka, what did he give you? I was slightly bothered you see.” (Tomoe) “If that paper is a marriage proposal from his two daughters,

Mio-dono might get dangerous in a lot of meanings after all.” (Shiki)
“Don’t say something so unpleasant, Shiki. There’s no way that doting father Rembrandt-san would present his daughters like this.” (Makoto)
Even if I said that, I was slightly uneasy.

I nervously untie the rolled up paper, and open it.

“Map?” (Makoto)

It was a map.

And it is a map from Tsige that shows the division where Kuzunoha company is.

A map as a congratulatory gift?

“Fumu, to think this would be given as a congratulatory gift.” (Tomoe)
“...Waka-sama, Tomoe-dono.” (Shiki)

“Shiki?” (Makoto)

Maybe he noticed something? Shiki pointed at a part of the map.

Ehm...

“Hoh, I see. As expected, he is a person that does interesting things-ja no.” (Tomoe) “Eeeeh?!” (Makoto)

That’s one of the main Streets that extends from the center of Tsige.

If I remember correctly, it is a Street called Rimeishi?

“T-This is...that Street, right?

I ask for confirmation just in case.

“No doubt about it. It seems like from today on, that Street is now named Kuzunoha Street, Waka.” (Tomoe) “That man, seriously. Just how much can he do in this town? It is certainly true that this is amusing though.” (Shiki) Tomoe and Shiki were in admiration and surprise, but at the same time, they held composure.

No wait, isn’t this normally something to be dumbfounded about?

The name of the Street that Shiki pointed...there’s certainly Kuzunoha

Street written down there.

To think that he didn't present me with an object but with a name.

Moreover, a Street in the town.

"I feel like...it has turned into something incredible." (Makoto)

That mutter of mine was swallowed by the darkness of the night and disappears.

When the revolution in Aion kingdom occurs, Tsige will look for the chance and declare independence.

With that flow of events, there's no doubt that fights will occur, and I will also be involved in them as a related party.

Something even more incredible than a Street changing its name will be occurring soon.

Even so...looking at the bustling store at my back...hearing the people in it, made me feel that I don't want to lose the bustle and liveliness of this town.

That's how I think.

Chapter 231: Whirling banquet

Late at night.

The time when the sound of the town stopped and Tsige finally entered silence.

Even so, in this town that has lately been called as a nightless town, there's still places where the liveliness still continues.

At the very least, this room where only one man is in, is wrapped in silence.

That man is Patrick Rembrandt.

The big company that everyone recognizes in Tsige, the owner of Rembrandt company.

“ ... ”

Rembrandt was still silent. His eyes were going through the mountain of papers that were piled up on his desk.

With his left hand, he took the papers, and with his right hand, he holds a pen he uses to write sometimes.

It goes without saying that what he is currently pondering in his head is about the information of Aion kingdom and Tsige.

And this is the most recent information he has received from the eyes and ears that Rembrandt company has placed in the several areas.

Of course, there's always new information coming to his place everyday.

In this moment when they are trying to take advantage of the revolution to gain independence in Tsige, he is technically the central figure, so he has been living days where sleep is precious.

“...Fumu. There's still rough areas but...the path has been made.”
(Rembrandt)

If this were the representative of Kuzunoha company, he would have already been drowned in information a long time ago and escaped from

reality with this amount of work.

It is an amount that even if a miracle happens, arranging it all would be his limit.

But Rembrandt who has his wit and experience, secures a small amount of sleep everyday by properly grasping the situation, and has already finished his insight regarding the revolution of Aion kingdom and independence of Tsige.

“You are being quite cautious.”

“...Well well, I am astonished. To think that you were someone who didn't show any manners when entering a room, I really didn't expect that.” (Rembrandt)

“It seems to be called a ‘surprise’. I learned this from Raidou-sama.”

The sudden visitor responded to the sarcasm of Rembrandt who was pointing out her lack of common sense.

It is certainly true that visiting late at night without any prior appointment is quite rude.

It is not something that can be forgiven by just saying it is a surprise.

“Do you think that will make me consent, Sairitz-sama? Coming late at night without even knocking, and obviously, no appointment. That's nothing but a trespasser.” (Rembrandt)

“That's true. I apologize for the rudeness. I am truly sorry. But, don't you think that we should get to know each other more, Patrick-sama?” (Sairitz)

The young woman that's called Sairitz, warded off the the sharp gaze and words of Rembrandt, and gave him a flirtatious glance with a glossy tone.

She is from the a neighboring country of Aion, Lorel Union, moreover, a person in an influential position.

Thinking about her position, she is currently taking an unbelievably dangerous action.

“I think you already understand what we both need though.”
(Rembrandt)

On the other hand, Rembrandt didn't break his usual attitude.

He simply waits for the next words of Sairitz.

“Ara, even though you are going to be doing the same shrewd acts you committed in the past, you are being quiet frank. It seems like the image I knew of you is slightly different now.” (Sairitz)

“You intend to show me the power of Lorel Union's information gathering, and place pressure on me? Even if I show the ability I had in the past, it would be unnatural to maintain the same personality as that time. You have already investigated that much, so don't joke around.”
(Rembrandt)

“You only have eyes for your wife and daughter huh. I can't help but view this as strange in my eyes. Matching your history and personality, it may be slight, but it feels like something is out of place. We are in a relationship where we will become comrades. I wouldn't do something like this just because of a small sense of discomfort of mine. That's one of the reasons of my invitation just now though.” (Sairitz)

“You are saying that if we were to unite our bodies, we would be able to trust each other? Well...I will admit that it is a valid method when in a complicity. But that's a delusion that only works between one individual and the other. It is not something I would expect the empress of Lorel would do at all.” (Rembrandt)

“...”

“The scale of this matter is way too big to apply. I don't know what's making you so impatient, but if you need someone to consult with, depending on the case, I might be able to help.” (Rembrandt)

“Good grief. I have been incredibly hurt as a woman, but I now understand that you truly love your wife and family. Even if I knew that my objective would be achieved no matter where the dice rolled, it still hurts. I will restrain from doing so in the future.” (Sairitz)

Sairitz speaks out words that can be taken as giving up.

It was an attitude that one can tell that the discomfort she had of Rembrandt inside her head had vanished.

“Seriously. If my wife were to have even slight suspicions about it, my daily life would become the worst. You seem to have already noticed, but I would like you to completely stop these kind of methods that only bring risks to me.” (Rembrandt)

While sighing, Rembrandt reprimanded the behaviour of Saritz.

It can't be helped.

Late at night, in the room where he is supposed to be doing work and already had his butler leave, there's a young woman.

It is clearly a situation that's unprofitable for the man.

“This matter is incredibly important for Lorel as well after all. Even if it is my personal impression, I still wanted to confirm the uncertain factor I felt. I am in a situation where I can't even touch the highest uncertain factor which is the Kusunoha company you see.” (Sairitz)

“Kusunoha and Raidou-dono are quite simple existences. It is not like I don't understand how you feel, but those guys return sincerity with sincerity, and fang with fang. They move with a truly simple logic.” (Rembrandt)

“There are times when it is fearsome not knowing just how far that simple logic can go. Especially for someone like me who is involved with the health of my country.” (Sairitz)

“Well, it probably can go real far. It is truly a nice sensation.” (Rembrandt)

“As a person that follows the religion of the Goddess, and serves the Spirits, this is something someone like you can't understand.” (Sairitz)

This time, Sairitz was the one who sighed, and then returned words of criticism at Rembrandt.

“Hahahaha! You can't understand huh. And yet, you have offered

cooperation and are trying to make the Kuzunoha company owe you. You said before that it didn't matter where it rolled, but with that kind of principle in your actions, you still possess this much ability in making decisions. You are truly a fearsome one." (Rembrandt)

"Not as much as you. Even if you had to discard your everything, the common sense that you believed in, you concentrated on Raidou-dono. That's truly the borderline of madness." (Sairitz)

"No no. Contrary to expectations, we might actually be more similar than you think. That's why, leaving aside trust, I am able to believe in you. I highly value that stubbornness of yours, and I can believe in your judgment as well." (Rembrandt)

"...I also...believe in your madness...and the conviction that supports it. That conviction of never betraying Kuzunoha company no matter what happens. That's why someone like me, who wants to avoid confronting them, is able to believe in you." (Sairitz)

"Seriously. In other words, there's absolutely no problems. We..." (Rembrandt)

"'Can form a good relationship', right?" (Sairitz)

"Yeah." (Rembrandt)

"Understood. I am sorry for interrupting your silent night. I once again apologize, Patrick-sama." (Sairitz)

"Don't mind it. Next time, I ask that you make a proper appointment beforehand, but I will welcome you. Ah right. Since we have the chance, is it okay to ask you one other thing?" (Rembrandt)

"Of course. Ask me." (Sairitz)

"I had some slight doubts regarding your actions and proposal you see. I wonder, just what kind of existence is a priestess for you?" (Rembrandt)

"...So you went for that." (Sairitz)

"Being one-sidedly shown the information gathering abilities of Lorel, felt unfair you see." (Rembrandt)

Rembrandt obviously had gathered information of Sairitz as well.

Saying: 'Regarding your actions and proposal', was only an excuse.

It is because he had gathered information of Sairitz that he felt doubts about her.

Rembrandt had questioned her about one of them.

"...For me, that personage is..." (Sairitz)

"That personage is..." (Rembrandt)

"A sister, a daughter, and also a monarch as well. No...that's not it."
(Sairitz)

"..."

The words that were slowly tied together by Sairitz, Rembrandt waited for them in silence.

"She is most likely...someone that we...want to protect no matter what."
(Sairitz)

And then, the revised words of hers made the eyes of Rembrandt show a light of surprise.

"Hoh~. For the empress, the priestess is obviously an important existence, but when I probed into it, I thought she was an existence that could be replaced." (Rembrandt)

"Replaced? It is certainly true that it is essentially that way. But for me, she is the only priestess. Fufu, that's an answer that would make people question my position as empress. Please keep this a secret." (Sairitz)

"Of course. Even so, I see. With this, I have also cleared a few of my doubts I held about you. I was able to make this time profitable for me as well. This is something to be happy about." (Rembrandt)

"That's great to hear. Well then, have a good night." (Sairitz)

"Dream well." (Rembrandt)

Sairitz left the same way she came in, without making a single sound.

Silence returns to the room once again.

“Fuh~. Being in the border of madness applies to both of us. If the basis for her judgment is the safety of the ‘present age’ priestess, I can understand that heavy bias of hers. This was an unexpected harvest.”
(Rembrandt)

He mutters in this room where only he remains now.

“If you lack consideration for the priestess, your neck might be taken in your sleep; but if we turn it around, it also means that if you are not negligent in your consideration to the priestess, you can believe in that empress as long as it is within acceptable bounds. It is truly a grateful thing that it has become a lot more easy to grasp her true motives.”
(Rembrandt)

When Rembrandt received an offer of cooperation from the empress of Lorel, he was obviously incredibly cautious.

Of course, he still hasn’t released the necessary amount of cautiousness towards Sairitz.

However, now that he was able to grasp a part of Sairitz’ principle of actions, he is able to understand her moves.

It was a big step forward.

“But, ‘no matter where it rolls’ huh. It is true that in this matter, there’s definitely not going to be any losses for Lorel. It is a truly ingenious choice of positioning. That woman would have done pretty well as a merchant too. If a bureaucrat like that existed to a certain extent in this country as well...is something I do wonder, seriously.” (Rembrandt)

Nevertheless, there’s no doubt that Sairitz is not an imprudent person at all.

She is dependable and can work as a good partner. That’s the kind of person she is, is what Rembrandt once again recognized of her.

“Anyways, I have done what I had to do. I also got my chance to brag. Now, I just have to continuously choose the thin but correct path. That’s

all I can do in what's left after all..." (Rembrandt)

In order to not regret it, he wrings out his everything.

Before the light of the room went out, the last words of Rembrandt were packed with those kind of emotions.



-The night a few days after the renewal of Kuzunoha company.

In the Rembrandt store, there's an amount of merchants gathered there that can't be compared to any time before.

For people that deal in trades at Tsige, an invitation from Rembrandt is in essence, the same as a forced summon.

Moreover, in the wording of that invitation, there's a part that says: 'if possible, make sure it is the representative coming'. That's the kind of event tonight.

In the fancy hall, there's cooking that didn't lose in splendor.

Looking at this, there were many merchants who didn't have a good color in their face.

"Oi, Raidou is also here."

"That's obvious, right? It hasn't been long since he has made his store. He can't just instantly return to Rotsgard after that. No matter if he is the favorite of Rembrandt-san."

"What. So he already intends to curry favor? He changes gears as quickly as always huh."

"You are one to say."

A number of people were sending gazes and talking in a low voice about Raidou who was having a friendly chat in the hall.

They were puzzled as to why Raidou, who didn't attend to the meetings from the Tsige merchants, was now in this place, and they were also displeased by it.

In other words, a group that didn't hold a good impression of Kuzunoha

company.

In terms of percent, it is about a 20–30% of the people here.

They are also people that pursued to do business in this town, hold ambitions, are young, and have a slight amount of talent without being blessed by enough good opportunities.

“Well, even so, I am being thoroughly defeated by Milliono company lately. Can’t do anything at all, seriously.”

“Fortunately, we are being well treated by the guild and the adventurers. But the reason why there has been a good wind blowing to our side as well...”

“As expected, because we are having a good relationship with Rembrandt company?”

“Isn’t that the same for everyone? I feel like there’s a different wind blowing.”

“...Hoh.”

“I would like to get along with Raidou from now on as well. There’s no need for us to crush each other, right?”

“It would be great if you were to tell us how.”

“Of course. It is pretty easy. I will also be teaching you a rule that you must keep no matter what. Listen well. Try having a sincere relationship with Kuzunoha company.”

“Kuzunoha?”

The man lowered his voice and was talking with someone that was a business rival in the past.

In the hall where groups of people have been formed here and there, this is one of the conversations that continues within it.

Everyone had a trait that they shared in common.

That from the companies that have been facing a radical growth, the people here are the centre of them.

Those people had grouped with their planned people, and were speaking about things they had planned beforehand.

The name of Kuzunoha company.

Normally, they would suspect the scheme of the other party.

But tonight, the circumstances are a bit different.

The person that's doing the conversation and the person that opened the conversation, knew that there's something backing the Kuzunoha company.

And different from the budding younglings, they also know that Rembrandt is in essence, the one that has a hold of this town.

Kuzunoha company has recently opened a store with unbelievable scale.

Of course, this can't be made possible without support from their surroundings.

It is hard to believe that this was done by a young representative that doesn't even stay in town for much. But Rembrandt even changed the name of a Street for his sake.

It was a nailed down truth.

"T-Then, are you saying that the land the Eleor company was holding onto...was in order to present it to Raidou?"

"That's right. Well, it was a gamble knowing it would be of high profit, but...he build a store of that scale. Everyone, do you understand?" (Eleor representative)

"Yeah. Honestly...that's one joke I can't laugh at."

"He is indeed someone that's been doing well in this town, but there's no way he would have enough savings to make something of that scale. That means he is gaining quite a lot in Rotsgard as well."

"I only know about selling and buying land, but Raidou-dono payed the full amount when he did the deal. It is a truly unusual way of buying."
(Eleor representative)

“Seiously?”

“A plot of land of that extend? Rather than calling it unusual, it is impossible.”

At a place slightly separated, the representative of Eleor company was also doing a similar conversation.

Both representatives from the Milliono and Eleor companies were told by Rembrandt to create a deep connection with Raidou for the sake of the future.

There’s no doubt that their deep connection with Rembrandt company has played a big role in their recent success.

The people that are in this group right now are the merchants that serve as the backbone of Tsige, and they are people that Rembrandt has been paying a reasonable amount of attention to.

Rembrandt had judged that even if it’s slightly late, they would be bringing Raidou’s topic into the conversations.

Looking at it as a whole, there’s around 30% of younglings here that don’t think of Raidou in a good light and were invited today into this gathering.

Also, there’s special companies that fulfill a low amount of demands, and private companies that don’t really hold much ambition; in short, there’s currently around 40% of people in this place that don’t hold much interest in Kuzunoha.

There’s people that differ in the type of industry and people that have different type of customers, so even if they are in the same Tsige, it is natural that there’s a lot of companies that have practically no connection with Kuzunoha company.

“...Fuh.” (Raidou)

Loosening the necktie that he is not used to wearing, Raidou takes one glass from the waiter, and gets some rest in a place slightly faraway.

There were many gazes that were concerned about his movements, but

they were holding back and no one tried to approach him.

In a place where there's gazes on him, Raidou couldn't show an unsightly behaviour.

He had relaxed while knowing the limits of how much.

“Around this time, Rembrandt-san is probably doing the last confirmation with the long standing shops huh.” (Raidou)

Around 10% of the merchants in the hall are representatives that have been doing business for a long time in Tsige.

Those people have been able to cope with the town's prosperity, and have been able to maintain their power without defaming their name.

In title and in public, they are side by side with Rembrandt. In other words, there's a good amount of companies that are at the top.

Soon after being invited, they were led into a separate room by the Rembrandt company, and for now, they have only been able to see who are the people present.

Today, Rembrandt was planning on revealing the movements of Aion kingdom to the merchants.

That means the phase of laying the groundwork has already passed.

But well, the standing of Kuzunoha company and Lorel Union's participation won't be disclosed though.

“ ... ”

Raidou held in the sigh that he was going to let out and fixes his attire.

And then, after emptying the glass he had in his hand, he returned to the hall.

It is time.

A few minutes after he returned to the place where the merchants are gathered, tonight's host: Patrick Rembrandt, had appeared with the big shots that everyone knows of, and the atmosphere in the place made a complete change.

Seeing that the amount of people appearing here were the same as the people that entered the separate room, Raidou slightly furrowed his brows.

Because even if he had heard from Rembrandt that he has been speaking with those people to a certain extent since a while back, it was still kind of hard to believe that he was really able to convince everyone.

But well, in the eyes of Raidou, Rembrandt is a flawless human.

Rather than thinking about the details of the confidential talk they had, Raidou simply held amazement towards Rembrandt.

“...Now then.” (Rembrandt)

Saying his thanks for accepting the invitation, voicing out words that praised each merchant for the prosperity of Tsige, and finishing all of that general talk, a sharp light appeared in the eyes of Rembrandt, and he began the real talk.

“Sadly, it has become a certainty that the fire of revolution will be burning in Aion kingdom. How will you...how will we move?”
(Rembrandt)

With a questioning tone, Rembrandt’s speech began.

The revolution in Aion.

Tsige’s independence.

“...I don’t think it will come true, but if possible...I pray that the kingdom, the empire, and the demon race don’t get involved in this matter.”
(Raidou)

Feeling that the words of Rembrandt were bringing heat into the hall, Raidou muttered this.

Because he already felt that they would definitely get involved in it as well.

This mutter was not because he didn’t have the resolve, but because he had already resolved himself.

Just how many ripples will this revolution create?

This was something that not even the Goddess could predict its outcome.

Credits

Translator: [Reigokai: Isekai Translations](#)

Epub: [Estevam](#) / [dotNOVEL](#)